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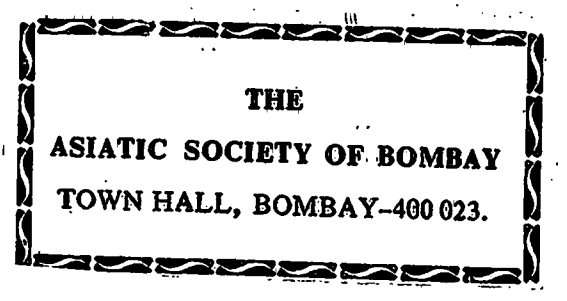

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THE

LIFE AND WORKS

OF

MUSGRAVE LEWTHWAITE WATSON,

SCULPTOR.

BY

HENRY LONSDALE, M.D.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

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LONDON:
GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS,
THE BROADWAY, LUDGATE.
1866.

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TO

GEORGE GILL MOUNSEY,

OF CASTLETOWN, CARLISLE.

My dear Sir,

As you were the "early friend and patron" of Musgrave Lewthwaite Watson, and rendered him many good services, there is no one to whom this brief history of his life and works can be more appropriately inscribed than to yourself. A high regard for your personal character and public worth has also influenced me in soliciting your kind acceptance of this dedication.

You have taken deep interest in the welfare of Carlisle, and gained the good wishes of the citizens

at large, and you have shown your love of Cumberland by your interpretation of numerous recondite facts in its history and archæology; — giving the world of letters reason to wish for further instalments from the valuable literary treasures in your possession.

In private life you enjoy the esteem of all who appreciate sound principles and scholarly attributes, marked by generous and enlightened sentiments, and happily associated with a large and untold benevolence.

Sincerely wishing that the following pages had been more worthy of your good name,

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours faithfully and obliged,

HENRY LONSDALE, M.D.

ROSE HILL, CARLISLE,
Sept. 29, 1866.

PREFACE.

BEING impressed with the originality and high character of the works of Musgrave Lewthwaite Watson, I had for years suggested that there should be a record of his life, and a description of his labours in the field of Art. Time wore on, and nothing was done. On repeating my wishes to aid any competent person who would be responsible for a biography, the Rev. Richard Jackson, of Wreay, near Carlisle (brother-in-law to Mr. Watson), earnestly entreated me to undertake the work, and most kindly offered to furnish me with all the fragmentary letters and documents in his possession. Thus encouraged, I sought in various quarters for further information relative to Watson, and invariably received the greatest courtesy. To obtain a clue to the facts and materials upon which this biography is based, has been attended with many difficulties which ample leisure, and a

thorough love of the subject, could alone overcome. These difficulties may in part be judged of by the reader, on being told, that eighteen years had elapsed since Watson's death, that a portion of his London life was unknown, that his family letters were nearly all destroyed, and that many of his works had shared the same iconoclastic fate. An additional trouble befel me in the death of my estimable friend, the good Pastor Jackson, before the work was fairly commenced.

My special thanks are due to Miss Mary Cunningham, who, without solicitation and without reserve, placed in my hands—an entire stranger to her—all Watson's private letters to her father, Allan Cunningham, thus enabling me to make the narrative of the Eldon group, so long involved in doubts and misrepresentations, a clear and patent history. My grateful acknowledgments are also due to Mr. Mounsey, of Castletown, Carlisle, for the loan of letters; to Mr. John Abraham, of Liverpool, for the opportunity of consulting Watson's correspondence with his brother, Robert Abraham; to Mr. Carrick, miniature painter, and Messrs. Woodington and Nelson, sculptors, for much verbal information arising out of their long intimacy with Watson: nor should I omit

to notice the obligingness shown me by Mr. Dafforne, of the London *Art Journal.*

An artist's life, with rare exceptions, is not marked by incidents of a striking kind, so that biographies of this class can hardly be made to assume an exciting character. The studio of an artist is the theatre of his labours, and the art creations of a sculptor constitute the materials upon which must necessarily rest his biography. His works are his passport to fame, or the reverse; if deficient in character, the sculptor sinks below the horizon of art, along with the crowd of mediocrities; if invested with genius, posterity awards him the immortality due to honourable distinction.

This biography should have fallen into more experienced hands than mine; but as no one seemed disposed to undertake it, I felt, for the honour of Cumberland, that the greatest sculptor born within its boundaries, and the most remarkable man in his own line after Flaxman, should not pass away without some notice, however imperfect, of his character and works. My desire has been to see justice done to the memory of a man who enjoyed but few favours during life—a life arduously spent in the development of truly noble works; though my pretensions to the task have no higher claim than

a love of art from boyhood, and that love promoted in mature life by travel and study in the principal Art Galleries of Europe, and by an inspection of the grandest of the Egyptian temples, and the more noted monumental ruins of Ancient Greece.

With the exception of the symbol on the frontispiece, the woodcuts in this work are selected from Watson's sketches, and have been ably rendered by W. J. Linton. Of the photographic negatives, seven were taken by Mr. Scott, of Carlisle; the Eldon and Stowell by Messrs. Hill and Saunders, of Oxford; the Outcasts by Mr. Carrick, of Regent Circus; and the Sarpedon, Flaxman, and City Frieze, by Mr. Ayling, Oxford Street, London, who printed and mounted the whole series.

H. L.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE

INTRODUCTORY. MEN AND SCENERY OF CUMBERLAND—VALE OF CAUDA—WATSON FAMILY AND HOLDINGS—"GRANDFATHER JOHN"—BIRTH AND EDUCATION OF MUSGRAVE—HIS ART-PROCLIVITIES . 1

CHAPTER II.

RESIDENCE IN CARLISLE FROM 1821 TO 1824. STUDY OF THE LAW, NOMINAL; ART, PREDOMINANT—FITS OF SOMNAMBULISM—THE BORDER CITY, ITS SOCIETY AND INFLUENCES—ART EXHIBITION—HOME CHANGES—A CRISIS 17

CHAPTER III.

THE GENESIS OF ART IN WATSON 39

CHAPTER IV.

LONDON AND THE CONTINENT. LOVE EPISODE—FLAXMAN AND THE ACADEMY—FLORENCE, ROME, AND NAPLES—LOST AND FOUND—THE SHY GERMAN—ILLNESS—SUPPOSED DEATH—LIFE MODELS—POMPEIAN VAGABONDISM 51

CHAPTER V.

PAGE

HOME AGAIN AND DISAPPOINTMENTS—BUSTS, MONUMENTAL AND OTHER WORKS FOR CUMBERLAND—CARLISLE EXHIBITION (1828)—"THE FATES," "CLYTIA," "IRIS," "HAGAR AND ISHMAEL"—THE DEAN OF CARLISLE'S PATRONAGE OF ART! 69

CHAPTER VI.

LONDON FROM 1829 TO 1839. THE STUDIOS—QUARRELS WITH CHANTREY—POLITICAL SKETCHES—BEHNES AND ST. PAUL'S—HOW TO TREAT A BORE—TERRA-COTTA WORKS—"BE IT DEATH OR SLEEP—LYING IN LOVELINESS" 81

CHAPTER VII.

JOLLY OR CRUTCHED FRIARS—THE NELSON MONUMENT—CHAUCER, SPENSER, AND JONSON—RAPHAEL—DANTE—BEATRICE—ELECTROTYPING 91

CHAPTER VIII.

PORTRAITURE OF WATSON. CHRIST BLESSING CHILDREN—IN CHRISTO PAUPERIBUS—THE OUTCASTS 107

CHAPTER IX.

SARPEDON—VICTORIA ROOMS, BRISTOL—LIVERPOOL MEMORIAL—MRS. BROUGHAM—SIR F. BUXTON 123

CHAPTER X.

THE FRIEZE IN THREADNEEDLE STREET, LONDON 137

CHAPTER XI.

PAGE

THE EEDON AND STOWELL MONUMENT 151

CHAPTER XII.

THE CAMERON MONUMENT—ROYAL EXCHANGE—QUEEN ELIZABETH—CARLISLE STATUES—SWEEP—CUNNINGHAM MEMORIAL—WILKIE—ST. VINCENT—ROGERS'S HUMAN LIFE ILLUSTRATED 169

CHAPTER XIII.

THE FLAXMAN STATUE—MAN'S FIRST SACRIFICE—LUCIFER AND CAIN—WATSON'S LAST DAYS AND DEATH 199

CHAPTER XIV.

SUMMARY 226

PHOTOGRAPHIC ILLUSTRATIONS.

MEDALLION PORTRAIT OF WATSON . . . . . *To face Title.*

THE JOLLY FRIARS 92

CHAUCER 100

THE OUTCASTS 118

SARPEDON 124

THE CITY FRIEZE 140

ELDON AND STOWELL MONUMENT 166

CAMERON MONUMENT 172

THE SWEEP 184

FLAXMAN STATUE 202

MAN'S FIRST SACRIFICE 207

LUCIFER AND CAIN 214

THE LIFE AND WORKS

OF

MUSGRAVE LEWTHWAITE WATSON,

SCULPTOR.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

MEN AND SCENERY OF CUMBERLAND—VALE OF CAUDA—WATSON FAMILY AND HOLDINGS—"GRANDFATHER JOHN"—BIRTH AND EDUCATION OF MUSGRAVE—HIS ART-PROCLIVITIES.

THE men of Cumberland have been credited with an aboriginal growth from the *Cymbri*, *Celtæ*, or *Celts*, an Eastern lineage of ancient date, pre-Druidical, and probably pre-historic. Ancient traditions, and a few passages from Herodotus, Strabo, and Cæsar, supplemented by more reliable philological and ethnological data, have led to the belief that the *Celts*,* whether *Turanian*, or of the

* Mr. Fergusson (History of Modern Architecture) states that "the true glory of the Celt in Europe is his artistic eminence." The citation of this opinion, theoretical or true, lends sanction to the few remarks in the text above pertaining to Watson's ancestry and country. Watson may have had Celtic

older branch of the *Aryan* family, in their migration westward, passed over to the British Isles, and having halted among the mountain fastnesses and lakes south of the Solway Frith, there located themselves, the territory so occupied being known in Saxon times as *Cymbri-lond*, and now as Cumberland. The scenery of the district might well exercise a weird influence over nomadic tribes. The alpine heights pinnacled towards the very abode of Taranis, the primæval forests and braky copse, denizened by *feræ naturæ*, the dark, interminable dells, Druidically sacred, the mists, clouds, waterfalls, and lakes, in all the features and contrast of barren crag with prolific sylvan, of black moorland with richly meadowed vale, were well calculated to impress with awe the Celt or Britannic—the more imposingly that the natural phenomena around afforded large incentives to superstition, and fit images for Pantheistic worship.

To-day the same mountains, rivers, and lakes, so inviting to the early settlers thousands of years ago, afford fertile themes to the poet, grand studies to the painter, and large enjoyment to the tourist and naturalist. Looking upon the geological upheavings, the hills or "fells," in all their diversity of outline, the lichened boulder and laminated shale, the runlets gurgling and spraying over

blood in his veins, traceable to the men who erected the stone circles—Druidical, sacrificial, or astronomical in character—found by the base of Crossfell, in East Cumberland, and known as "Long Meg and her Daughters."

chasmed rocks into streams and lakes, the woods and green pastures, under a fitful northern sky; now radiant with yellow light, now in deep blue, or darker shadows—Poesy has before her the imagery of nature in bold, broad, and beauteous expanse, upon which to build her imagery of words; whilst, in the ever-changing clouds and pebbly stream, in the ferns, the flowers, and foliage of the lake country, Art finds a thousand forms for its delineation and delight. The citizen of the world seeks refuge from the world's cares, and the philosophic observer finds food for contemplation, in scanning the wooded vale, or climbing the hilly steep, and in floating, *dolce far niente* fashion, along the lake ensconced amidst the hills, and mirrored with the picturesque. Everywhere in the district organic life, from the tiny moss to the many-centuried oak, has its setting or relief against the massive inorganic—basaltic or calcareous; and nature is seen in the harmony and contrast that delights, ennobles, and spiritualizes man. There are no continuous plains, and scarcely any monotony of surface, in Cumberland; everywhere the landscape presents lines and features varied and fresh from all points of view; woods, and wilds, and dales without a name; becks, and burns, and rivers, in tortuous windings, now limited between rocky banks, now expanding through richly-vestured plains in their course to Solway's broad and sun-gilt sands; knolled eminences, wooded uplands; and, to crown all, the horizon is so grandly visible in the

lofty mountain barriers, and cloud-transcending peaks. Along with this abundance of nature in her grandest moods, the county rejoices in bucolic contentment, so that the Cumbrian, unless called by duty to "camp, sea, or city," does not bear the first transplanting from his native heather, his mind being apt to linger by the pleasant streams, the shady lanes, and other home reminiscences.

Of the Cumbrian mountains Skiddaw is among the most noted and conspicuous, and from its north-eastern slopes—Skiddaw Forest, and other sources—arises the river Caldew or Cauda—

> "From thy mountainous birth-place,
> The cloud-mantled Skiddaw,
> Thy stream, dearest Cauda,
> Runs merrily on,"*

winding its way for nearly twenty miles as an impetuous stream, and then falling into the larger river Eden, near to the ancient castle of "merrie Carlisle." Excepting the lake-country, the Vale of the Cauda is hardly to be surpassed in pastoral beauty and loveliness; and that portion of it known as Sebergham—often compared to Avoca, in Ireland—is the prettiest of all. At the

* From a spirited ballad written by the late Mr. George Cowen, of Mill-Ellers, Dalston. Though Caldew is the term used in the district, Cauda, as Mr. Cowen observed, is the ancient orthography and orthoepy of the word, and assuredly prettier and more poetical than Caldew.

lowest point of Sebergham, where it becomes continuous with the vale of "The Rose," and much narrowed by the approximation of the eastern and western banks of the river, is a ford of the Cauda, and close upon the left side of the stream an old-fashioned farmhouse and outbuildings — the "Bogg," or Bogg-Hall. The Bogg premises are now in a state of dilapidation, and fast falling to ruin—the "T. W. and F. W. 1691" over the doorway being the only proofs now existing of a past generation whose names were among the best known in the district.

In this retired spot, called by Cumbrians a "hidden nuik," known only to the very few neighbours who had occasion to cross the ford, or the village angler in search of trout, a family of the name of Watson settled themselves a long time ago. What possessed the original holder of the Bogg land — Watson or another—to pitch his tent at the lowest part of a sequestered vale, when such fine sites prevailed on the higher banks, can only be guessed at; but in days of yore, when land was imperfectly cultivated, and the higher districts bleak and cold, the feeling was in favour of dwellings ensconced in the green and cosy vales near to pastures and flocks. If the homestead had the advantage of being sheltered from nearly all the blasts that blew, it had but a brief summer of bird-singing and harvest mirth to set off against a long winter's solitariness, and to any but the rustic-minded the Bogg offered the lonely seclusion without a

redeeming point in social life. The primitive building or farm-house accorded with the surroundings, and sufficed for the home comforts of dalesmen; and it may fairly be inferred, from the numerous progeny of Watsons, that life at the Bogg was active, genetic, and wholesome. The Watsons continued to be born here, to grow up on milk and oatmeal porridge, pease-pudding and bacon, and other products of the farm; and to thrive right well. When such diet prevailed, and before the use of tea came into fashion, Cumbrians were known over England for their hardihood and physical strength, and the farming class presented as fine a body of men as George the Third could boast of in the whole of his dominions; indeed, the "Life Guardsmen" and "Household Troops" are still chiefly derived from the men of the Northern Counties—the dalesmen and their collateral branches, stalwart fellows, easily moulded by discipline into good, as they are handsome, soldiers. The majority of the Watsons did not rest content with the homely "Bogg," but scattered themselves abroad like swarms from their parent hive—some settling themselves in the neighbouring vales, and others seeking town-life, or boldly emigrating to "the Plantations" or "the Indies." Of their genealogy, lives, and fortunes, this chronicle need take no note earlier than John Watson, who figured as "statesman" * or landowner of the Bogg-farm in the middle of the last century.

* In Cumberland the term "statesman" is a synonym for yeoman, or a

John Watson was considered a hearty fellow, and fond of his beer. He married twice. By his first spouse, who died young, he had but one child, a daughter, who grew up to early womanhood whilst he remained a widower. Attracted by the society and cheer of a neighbouring hostelry at Raughton Head, John would ford the Cauda in low water or flood, night or day, and at all hazards. Though winter nights must have often brought to his experience that

> " Fearfu' soughs the burtree banks,
> The rifted wood roars wild and dreary "

along his secluded path, narrowed by thickly planted hedgerows, it was nevertheless worth encountering to escape from the dull and lonely domicile,

> " to get planted unco right
> Fast by an ingle, bleasing finely,
> Wi' reaming swats (*new ale*) that drank divinely."

On one occasion, whilst tippling at the door of the " Duke of York " public, John saw a buxom lass in her teens engaged in

person who lives upon and cultivates his own land. One of the greatest boasts in Watson's time was to claim the position of statesman. The farming class had their jollity and merry-making at " mine inn," and gay Lotharios of John's stamp were met with in every hamlet. The times were rude, and morals rather loose, when cock-fighting parsons set so great an example in the roadside public, and made the welkin ring with jôke and song.

salving sheep—a practice more worthy of Corin in the forest than Audrey at an alehouse door, but by no means so rare in those days, when women were called upon to perform many of the rough labours of husbandry. The girl's position on a sheep-stool, and her loose attire, revealed some of the beauties of her sex in a manner that proved irresistible to the rash and amorous widower in his cups. He wooed and married the maid, and took her home to the Bogg as his second wife; and, placing her in the best arm chair of the parlour, called in his daughter—hitherto ignorant of both the courtship and alliance—to be introduced to her new (step) mother! This second wife bore a large family to John, and her first effort in that line resulted in boy-twins, born in 1754. A difficulty arose soon after their birth as to the first comer, and, whilst the mother and gossips were in favour of one, the father fancied the other, who had been baptized Thomas, and adopted him as his heir.

The twin Thomas, on reaching manhood, acted as many of his ancestors had done, and left the family roof-tree in search of fresh fields and pastures new, in the hope of gaining a better position than that of farming in the Vale of the Cauda. He sailed for the West Indies, made money there, and returned home; and, on the 6th April, 1795, married Mary, the daughter of Mr. Musgrave Lewthwaite, an ironmonger in Carlisle. Thomas was much below the middle size, active, social, and neighbourly;

and, contrary to the usual mode of "sorting together" in wedlock, took one of the least women in Carlisle for his spouse. Mrs. Watson was so slender in frame, that her neighbours compared her in weight to a firkin of butter, about seventy pounds; and a farmer, lifting her across some wet ground, declared that she was as light as a pair of diking mittens—strong leathern gloves used by husbandmen in making thorn fences. Thomas and Mary settled down in Hawksdale, on a farm called Low House, afterwards and now known as Hawksdale Hall—situated two miles lower down the Cauda than the Bogg, and a mile and a half from Dalston, and about six miles south-west of Carlisle. In this old manor-house the couple lived twenty-eight years, pursuing farming for a time, and, after the death of Mr. Lewthwaite (Mrs. Watson's father), carrying on the further business of an iron forge at Buckabank, in the immediate neighbourhood. To Thomas and Mary Watson were born, at Hawksdale Hall, three sons and three daughters. The second son was born January 24, 1804, and named after his grandfather, "Musgrave Lewthwaite," and his history is the one to be traced in the following pages.

All that is necessary to be established in the genealogy of Musgrave Lewthwaite Watson, is his origin from the Watsons of the Bogg in Sebergham — not an artistic parentage by any means—a family of yeomen, tillers of the soil and lovers of the vale, of independent means and stirring action, and not devoid

of family pride. Owing possibly to their isolation, if not superiority of feeling, the Watsons appeared less social than their neighbours, and more claimant of attention and respect from others, so it was said that, "pride shone through the skins of all the Watson family;" if so, this pride served them a good purpose by drawing them out of their boggy *habitat* into the wider circles of professions, trades, and colonization. The Watsons, happily, had a tendency to rove from home, or the family nest would have been overstocked by one prolific generation after another; and their desire to see the world was with the view of being "somebody" in it—a capital spirit—emulation, or pride, if you will—that the residents of the other districts in Cumberland would do well to follow.

The boy Musgrave, having grown out of petticoats, was "breeched," and in due time sent to school at Raughton Head, a village in the vicinity, and only a mile or so distant from home. For some years the Raughton Head school had been noted for its clerical masters, and the one under whose tuition Musgrave came to be placed was the Rev. R. Monkhouse, a man of scholarly acquirements. The discipline might be severe, the tasks hard, and the holidays short, but an amount of classical knowledge was imparted to boys by some of those village schoolmasters, that would contrast favourably with the more talked of efforts of some of our latter day "preceptors."

Mr. Monkhouse was fond of drawing, and a little odd in his habits, and the same tastes, if not eccentricities, prevailed with Musgrave, so that master and pupil hit on admirably; and, when Musgrave reached his teens, it is said that they became more like companions of different ages, than as teacher and taught. Owing to this feeling, it was inferred that Musgrave imbibed his love of art from his schoolmaster, forgetting the fact of the boy's partiality for drawing, and his cutting figures in wood as soon as he was entrusted with a pocket-knife; so that the developing force of art-growth did not come from his Latin teacher. Musgrave was considered a clever boy, fonder of classics than mathematics, and prone to lead his companions—dull and chagrined when low down in his class, bright and at home as the head or "dux" of his own circle. In the study of classical authors, he took interest in the poetical narratives, and conned over the characters of men who had gained celebrity in civil or military history. When engaged in arithmetic, and safe from the supervision of the master's eye, his slate presented more sketches than systematic numbers; and on reaching algebra—his artistic tendencies going on *pari passu*, if not much faster than, his legitimate schooling—the picturesque outlines of man and beast got strangely mingled with the hard symbols of algebraical formulas. Beyond the strictly scholastic work to which village boys are trained, there seems no clear

indication of Musgrave having benefited much from historical reading, or an acquaintance with the English classics; moreover, boys are not so prone to that kind of study at the best; but in his case, with a strong hobby in possession, there was still less likelihood of his engaging in ancient lore or in modern *belles-lettres*.

Musgrave having reached his sixteenth or seventeenth year, and finished his schooling with Mr. Monkhouse, his parents came seriously to think of the application of this scholarship to the future man. He had been educated far above the farm and bucolic pursuits, and was much too classical for a forge; besides, neither trade nor commerce seemed to accord with the home feeling—specially represented by his mother and a spinster aunt. It was argued, and very fairly too, on the ground of his being a lad of sharp parts and high promise, that Musgrave should do something for the family status, and adopt a professional walk. He seemed too little for a pulpit; besides, a Cumberland curacy, in those days of miserable stipends, was anything but a desideratum. Indeed, it was a by-word in the times of the Georges of any man professionally behind the age, that he was as ignorant as a Cumberland curate; and what man of sense and classical attainments, or even of mediocre ability, would join a Church where the loaves and fishes fell to the Dean and Prebends, and the crumbs of barley bread to the share of the parish priest?

The farm servant was often as well paid as the incumbent, and, as a rule, more sure of his daily rations; and many an ordained clergyman had to follow husbandry to eke out a kind of parochial subsistence.* Musgrave was too delicate for medical practice, so law was fixed upon by the family as the most eligible profession for him. Musgrave, whose art-tendencies had been encouraged by everybody in the home-circle, being asked what profession he would like, replied, with the assurance of one who knew his own mind—Artist or Sculptor. This reply, by no means agreeable to his father, was specially annoying to his mother, who, having suggested the law, felt, like many of her sex, that she should have her own way without let or hindrance. The quiet of Hawksdale Hall was disturbed by the lad Musgrave wishing to walk in one direction—that of Art, whilst his parents sought to drive him in another; and this unpleasant state of affairs was not modified, but increased, by "Aunt Lewthwaite," who had joined the law proposal with a spinster's vigour, and maintained her opinions with a spinster's inflexibility. Maiden aunts are

* The history of the Church of England, as exhibited in Cumberland so late as the third decade of the present century was literally disgraceful to the age, and to the higher episcopacy. "Dives" sat in the lawn and purple of the Church, feasting sumptuously every day, whilst "Lazarus," holding a "cure of souls," would gladly have clothed himself in the cast-off garments, and partaken of the wasted meats, of the lowest flunkey in the Bishop's palace.

proverbial for their influence, and in this case it was directed against poor Musgrave, and added fuel to the flame of his mother's ire. Though the second son bore the greatest resemblance to his mother, it was supposed that he fared worse than his brothers and sisters at her hands. This opinion arose in all probability from her wish to curb Musgrave's self-will and obstinacy, of which there had been early manifestations. Mrs. Watson was a clever person, possessing a highly sensitive nature; she could not brook crosses in her path, least of all any perversions of feeling—by which was meant contrariety to her own dicta—exhibited by her children. Her discernment of Musgrave's character was well shown in advising him to the study of the law; for, had he not been born an artist, there was no walk in life in which he would have shone so well. He had good abilities, powers of argument as well as judgment, shrewdness or diplomacy, all which bespoke his fitness for the pursuit; but he himself would not admit the possession of any faculty save one—the artistic.

Whilst Law and Art stood as antagonistic forces within the manor house or hall at Hawksdale—the claimants of the former being as three to one of the latter—Musgrave tried to kill his time out of doors, knowing full well that his presence within exposed him to repeated taunts and fireside lectures, and those perpetual by-hits which women can deal out with an emphasis of their own—most trying to the patience of young or old, but

specially worrying to impressible natures. Seeking refuge from the storm of words, he cared not where he rambled. Sometimes he plunged into the thicket of the Bishop's plantation, but more generally he sought the sheltered banks of the Cauda, and, listening to the purling stream, tried to be "lulled by its falling waters." When possessed of a book, he would read under a thorn hedge, and pick flowers and leaves for his sketch book, or bask in the sunshine for hours together—alone, shy, and always taciturn. This isolation from those of his own age attracted the notice of the neighbours, who naturally looked upon him as eccentric or singular; and the old adage was oft applied to him by elderly wise folks, that if he lived he would "either make a spoon or spoil a horn" some day. This wildness of humour and rural freedom were not good probationary steps to urban life, indeed sadly incongruous with the restraint of an office and continuous study in prospect before him. He clung, however, to his open-air pleasures and his early love—Art, and remonstrated with all his might against the law; on the other hand, his mother and aunt were indignant at the idea of his becoming a poor artist, and a disgrace to his family name. The Lewthwaites had as high a bearing and quite as much pride as the Watsons, so that artisanship and masonic-like work could not be reconciled with their self-dignity as money and land possessors. They little dreamt that Musgrave had in him the elements of a greatness that would far outshine all his ancestry,

and that the "carving on stone," so strenuously opposed by them day after day, would be with him the carving of a page in English historical Art.

To understand this strong antipathy to Art so pertinaciously held by the Watsons, it should be explained that the knowledge of Art in that day, in the retired rural districts, seldom rose above the corner cupboard and its china teacups, the rough mouldings of a door lintel or chimneypiece, or the churchyard tombstones upon which were traced cephalic forms with nameless appendages, meant for wings and as emblems of the seraphic, but enough to make the very angels weep at their mundane portraits. No wonder the family felt grieved at the dignity or rather the profession of the law being set aside for trumpery Art and chisel work, and therefore, without further parleying, took Musgrave to Carlisle, and articled him to the Messrs. Mounsey, solicitors, in the spring of the year 1821.

CHAPTER II.

RESIDENCE IN CARLISLE FROM 1821 TO 1824.

STUDY OF THE LAW, NOMINAL; ART, PREDOMINANT—FITS OF SOMNAMBULISM —THE BORDER CITY, ITS SOCIETY AND INFLUENCES—ART EXHIBITION— HOME CHANGES—A CRISIS.

IT was a sore day for Musgrave Watson when he had to enter the attorney's office in Carlisle. Cribb'd from the liberty that he largely enjoyed by the banks of the Cauda, to be cabin'd and confined to four bare walls, and an uncherished solitude, and for several hours a day to an irksome study, was a severe ordeal to undergo at the threshold to a business life. Fortunately, there is abundant buoyancy in janty seventeen, and Watson was not the lad to sit down and wail over Nature's lot; so, being encouraged by every kindness from the Messrs. Mounsey, he tried to make the best of his position, and was enabled, after a time, to assume a virtue which he could not be said to possess, of reading "Coke upon Lyttleton," and discharging the routine duties of a solicitor's clerk. His pencil was frequently in request to relieve the tediousness of his legal pursuits, and nothing could be more convenient

and desirable than his office desk, in which he could so deftly store away his sketches from the gaze of his masters, and the observation of his fellow clerks. On the first touch of the latch of the door, the lid of his desk was raised, and the non-official or artistic work hidden from sight. In a few months it seemed to be understood that art with Watson was a primary pursuit, and law but a secondary following that served to keep up appearances and to satisfy the parental predilections and wishes.

When at school, Musgrave carved in wood with his pocket knife, and, as he grew older, took to engraving on metal, probably making his own tools in his father's forge. In Carlisle he continued the same work of wood-cutting and engraving after office hours. At first he was content to operate upon copper pennies and twopenny pieces. By rubbing off "Britannia" and Britain's George, he obtained a fine polished surface for the practice of his art, and astonished his companions by his dexterity, the minuteness of his lines, and the happy effects of his workmanship. All kinds of forms were sought for delineation, and, as his experience increased, he obtained larger plates than His Majesty's coinage upon which to exercise his art. His companions begged his work, and suggested new subjects for his pencil and graving tool. His powers as a draughtsman got sounded amongst his contemporaries, and every one with the slightest feeling for art became eager for the friendship of "Little Watson."

He drew vast numbers of figures and landscapes, and his pencil was often solicited to adorn ladies' albums, and the sketch-books of art connoisseurs. Being fond of poetry, and specially fond of Cumberland ballads, one of his first and best copper engravings was to illustrate a poem of a local bard and celebrity, Robert Anderson. Now and then he did water-coloured drawings, and painted in oil, in both of which he seemed to succeed. He was never at ease if he had not pen, pencil, or burin in hand; in short, he was a restless being, whose idol was Art, and whose worship of the goddess was as constant as the hour by Shrewsbury clock. Some of the earliest of his Carlisle sketches show unusual powers for an untaught youth, who could have had no opportunity of studying the draped figure. In contrasting the past with the present mode of dress, the classical costume assigned to the Greek and Roman with the French fashions adopted by his countrywomen, he showed up the follies of the hour, and the almost caricatured decadence of style compared with the true and graceful adornment of the person. His satirical touches were occasionally too fine to be understood by the heavy provincial citizen; in others again, the "noble Roman" stood in severe simplicity, while "John Bull and his Missis" were enveloped in unmeaning dilatations of silk, or constrained by tight narrowings of hose. Many of these sketches were happy hits, and his outlined drapery of the classical forms betrayed an early appreciation

of the noble in art, which found its consummation in after years in the public statues now adorning the square between the Courts of Justice in Carlisle and the interior of the Criminal Court.

Though eager to be doing in any direction of art when favoured by materials and opportunity, he looked upon all his artistic experiences as preparatory to one aim, that of sculpture. To carry out this wish of modelling was no easy matter, as he had no teacher and no studio to fall back upon. His lodgings were not adapted for the purpose, and his shyness prevented him looking further, so he reserved his attempts at modelling for holiday pastime at Hawksdale Hall, where rooms could be had for the work. Recreation or "Sabbath exercises" formed no part of his creed or enjoyment, if art was accessible; so, having got a stock of clay, he selected an upper room of the old hall that was little frequented, and there he used stealthily to labour for the entire day at modelling. His family fancied him out in the fields, inhaling "the incense-breathing morn," or joyous mid-day sun, or so abstractedly devoted to special studies as to forget his meals and his friends of the fireside circle. This happy ignorance on the part of his family was not of long continuance, as the capsizing of a pail of water, a damp ceiling, and a dirtied carpet, led to the discovery of his real work above stairs. A storm of indignation arose out of this misadventure, and direful calamities were foretold Musgrave for his neglect of his proper Sabbath duties, though a

heavier gravamen than Sunday work ruled the feminine lecturers in their scolding. The exposure of his work was not the only distressing circumstance to his family, who could not fail to perceive the absorbing influence of Art, and that the indentures of apprenticeship were the only ties that bound Musgrave to the law.

Driven from work under the paternal roof, he sought opportunities for modelling in Carlisle, and his inquiries led to the acquaintance of two kindred spirits, Joshua Anderson, surgeon, and Robert Abraham, a student of medicine; the former of whom showed his love of Art by modelling busts, and collecting works pertaining to its study; the latter a young man of fine taste and scholarship. He was further encouraged by those specially engaged in Art, Mr. D. Dunbar, sculptor, Mr. M. Nutter, an artist, and Mr. T. Carrick, the miniature painter. In the third year of his law studies, Musgrave had the pleasure of seeing an exhibition of paintings and sculpture in Carlisle, originating with the followers of Art proper, a few connoisseurs like Anderson, backed by county gentlemen in possession of pictures, who were ready to lend them, and to aid further by subscriptions, in the formation of a school of modelling. Musgrave joined the modelling class under Dunbar, and soon showed his powers. Every one in the school was struck with the small frame and large intelligence of "the lad Watson." "He was intelligence all over," said one of his compeers; "not in his eyes and face, but in every movement, and so quiet and gentle-

manly." Another said, "Muzzy was all head and no body; you could have put him into your big coat pocket; and what a lad for work and composition." As these opinions were expressed to the writer of these pages but yesterday, how strongly-marked must have been the personal traits and bearing of Watson, and how visibly superior to others in the accomplishment of work, when, after forty-three years, the recollection of his schooling days in art are so visibly retained by his fellow students of that period. Watson devoted all his spare hours to modelling; in the morning before, and in the evening after, office hours, and by the end of the season vied with the best hands in the school, not excepting the master himself. In chiselling he was not so apt, and not equal to the strictly masonic members of the class.

Nothing came amiss to Watson that fell under the designation of Art. Wood, copper, silver, or stone, could all be made to yield under his burin or chisel, forms, grave or gay, natural or grotesque. His pencil outlines, his water-coloured drawings and oil-paintings, showed equal ability, touch, and excellence. In any of these walks he would have earned a livelihood; he had only to fix his love on Art and marry her for life, to enable him to gain fame and fortune; but of all the divisions of art, speaking generically, Watson shone most as a draughtsman. His pencil seemed stereotyped with forms which flowed like ink from a pen upon the paper before him. His outlines of the human figure were the best, but it

would be difficult to name any walk in domestic life, or the more obvious natural history, where his pencil did not show superiority. Nothing surprised his Carlisle friends so much as his rapid fancy, a kind of instinctive perception of the thing sought for, unless it were his rapid performance, and the effects he obtained from a few simple lines. He had painted a Venus on a piece of millboard, and was showing it to a "brother of the brush," who admired it so much that Watson presented it to him, and then offered to paint his friend's portrait on the other side, and the likeness was accomplished in a spirited way at one sitting.

If early hours, hard work, and varied occupation—of the law, conventionally, and of art, devotionally, blended with social intercourse, and exercise in the open air—should promote sleep, the daily use of both mental and bodily powers by Watson should have been most conducive to night repose. It was not so, however, and Watson not only slept badly, but rose frequently from his bed, and became "a sleep-walker." The first, or perhaps the most decided, indication of his somnambulism seemed to rest on a special circumstance, unusual, and not less disagreeable to him. He had had leeches applied to his person by his friend Abraham, and his night dress became spotted with blood, and this he particularly remarked upon when getting into bed. Falling asleep, he dreamt that he had murdered a child, and that the police were after him. In his anxiety to avoid apprehension, he jumped out

of bed, rushed from his room, and, in his hurry to escape, knocked down the landlady on the staircase, then undid the bolts and bars of the outer door, and gained the public street. He ran first towards the market-place, then down the main street leading to the bridges crossing the Eden, and suddenly awoke as he was gaining the northern arches. A pretty predicament for a man to find himself in at midnight!—on a public thoroughfare near the river, with no other clothing than a night-shirt, and that shirt covered with blood stains. Watson realized the awkwardness of his position very fully, and had to consider his mode of retreat. He naturally sought the by-ways to his lodgings, but, in adopting this course, he forgot, till it was too late, that he had to pass a military guard-house and sentinel, and this caused him no small trepidation, lest he should be taken for a runaway prisoner, or something worse. Fortunately the guardian of "British interests" did not show outside the sentinel box, so Watson passed unchallenged, and, it may be added, suffered nothing from his night's escapade.

Watson's nervous excitable temperament had probably been strained beyond its powers, and the depression from loss of blood had done the rest. At Hawksdale Hall he admired one of his father's best cows, and one night he rose, when there was a sprinkling of snow on the ground, and walked to the field where the cow depastured, and returned to bed unconscious of

his doings: the foot-marks revealed the circumstance. His smaller feats of somnambulism created no sensation in the household, and no surprise to his friends. When the tendency to sleep-walking left him is not known, but in Rome, three or four years subsequently, he had been apprehensive of the fits returning (if he had not an attack), and had the doors and windows of his apartments so fixed as to preclude all escape by them without alarming the other inmates of the house.

The reader will naturally expect to be informed of the general condition of Carlisle, its tendencies and characteristics as a city; and how far Watson's mind was influenced by its society during his three years' residence within its walls.

Carlisle, with a population of 14,531, in 1821, had its cathedral, its corporation, and military garrison as its Church and State holdings, whilst calicoes, ginghams, hats, and fish-hooks, represented its chief manufactures. The ancient castle, walls and gates of the city, around which are clustered border legends, border ballads, and many acts of daring, the stirring episodes of a greater history, were still pretty perfect in their defensive attitudes against the raids of the Scotch (though such had not been threatened since the '45); and within the city itself were remnants of a bygone architecture of wood and thatch and overhanging gable—quaint domiciles occupied by quainter citizens of the broad and beery stamp, newsmongers not lacking invention, and chief

centres for gossiping parties around the market-cross. Carlisle had its political fights, spiteful and acrimonious as theological feuds, and as hot as the strongly-spiced drinks with which the "Blues and Yellows" fanned their zeal; it had its annual races and wrestling games—the most noted in England—its "Hunt" and winter assemblies; the trade guilds had their "Ascension-day" sports and freeman's jubilees; whilst the citizens at large considered it part of "our glorious Constitution" to season their weekly labours by a "good jollification" at the close of the Saturday's market. The streets were as gay as a little French town with soldiery, and each hostelry had its "bold dragoon" or "handsome hussar" in doorway relief, so that, with military parades and "Rule Britannias" freshness and colouring pervaded the outer life of "the merrie city."

It is not, however, with the external phases, the topography and trade, but the social and intellectual relations—the inner, life—of Carlisle that this memoir is concerned; and in this direction, *quoad* the ennobling and progressive in thought, the city's picture unfortunately showed less of the *couleur de rose* and more of the Rembrandt shading.

Nothing could well be less profitable and less invigorating than the society of small cathedral cities in the second and third decades of this century, and, according to some, it would perhaps be claiming too much for the present times, to say that

they have shown any marked and notable advance on the past. The Abbey of Carlisle and residence of the "chief episcopates," with its buildings, high walls, and castellated gates, formed a kind of architectural *cul de sac* apart from the general current of the city, and physically deficient in circulation, freshness, and force; whilst the intellectual manifestations of its occupants, Deans and Prebends, partook somewhat of the character of an old ecclesiastical glebe too long green side up, mossy in herbage, non-fertile, and non-genetic of either blood or brain. The Church basked on its ancient prestige, made itself cozy and comfortable in its easy-chair, and felt no check to its equanimity and repose by the worldly factions outside the gates. High mental culture, applied scholarship, or the promotion of the æsthetical received but faint consideration at the hands of the Abbey dignitaries. Percy ("Reliques of Ancient Poetry"), Law, Carlyle, and others of celebrity in the diocese had long been gone, and Archdeacon Paley laid in his last resting-place, between his two wives, in the north aisle of the cathedral, and with him slept all that was eclectic, logical, and vigorous in the Church of England in the time of the Georges. Dean Milner, of mathematical note and philosophical leanings, had also been called "to his fathers," and Dean Hodgson—a well-marked instance of the type "High and Grand Church"—reigned in his stead.

The representatives of the Church rarely took part in matters

extra limites Ecclesiæ; they attended the annual meetings of the Dispensary and Fever Hospital, had their brief say, and uttered their feeble platitudes, and then returned to their *sanctum sanctorum*, comforted by the unctuosity of having taken part in a town's cause, and with the further gain of a publicity of their virtues as shining lights in a local print. The Church courted county families, but recognised no townsman who could not return the prandial compliments of grouse, madeira, and flunkeyism; it showed no partiality for the fine arts, and apparently avoided the avenues to literature and science; it extended no hand of welcome to rising talent, and lent no support to struggling energies in any walk of life.

As the Church corporation ate, drank, and slept, and thus fulfilled their mortality, if not their mission, on earth; the civic corporation, the servile and supple creatures of a lord lieutenant of the old Tory school, spent the city revenues in an inglorious following of the ecclesiastics; and these *gemini*, the military governor and officers, and a few "old families," constituted the "high quality"—*le monde* of Carlisle. Then there was a large middle class of manufacturers and tradesmen, whose business was to live—practical, not æsthetically-minded men; and the general body of artisans who had their work and gains to consider, except on public occasions, when they became highly demonstrative as catechisers of electioneering candidates, and not less apt as

physical-force obstructives at the polling booth—the roughs and radicals of "merrie Carlisle." Like other cities, Carlisle had its sects, its coteries, or, as the phrase goes, "sets"—the set exclusive and Evangelical, a kind of *Piagnoni* or lachrymose party, repining over other people's sins yet wofully blind to their own, and whilst strongly denunciatory of their neighbours, by no means averse to

> "Compound for sins they were inclined to,
> By damning those they had no mind to."

—the Dissenting sets congregated in Bethels small and great; to wit, the ranting, hymn-singing, and loudly proclaiming Methodists, antipodal to the silent of tongue and golden in worship "Meek Friends," in white and chastened beauty of attire shaded by drab; Christian brethren of various confessions—Westminster, Cromwellian, and Baptismal—but all alike in their tendency to divide and sub-divide on hair-breadth differences of doctrine, and thus in strong contrast to the one, adhesive, and infallible Roman Catholic; and lastly, but far from leastly, the creedless multitude, or Christians unattached.

There were no educational institutions, strictly so called, and the ruling powers of the Moot Hall took no steps to remedy this defect, nor did they endeavour in any way to raise the habits and feelings of the adult population—their sole thought after their own aggrandizement being centred upon an unblushing venality of

the city freemen; indeed, the political abasement of the city, so well known far beyond the walls, influenced the general tone of society, and retarded both social and intellectual progress. The "Gentleman's Library" was trying to get known in the district; the "Mechanics' Institute" had not been called into existence; and any collection of books in the place hardly came under the category of libraries. There was no pretension to a "Philosophical Society," that climax of provincial modesty; no lectures and no lecture-hall; and when men met together, it was to talk over the frivolities of the day, not to subject their minds to a healthful rivalry and competition; in short, fun, frolic, and feverish excitement were in greater favour than reading, study, and mental culture. There was but one public news-room within the walls, and "Cobbett's Register" enjoyed sovereign rule in the suburban workshops; to the majority of folk the news of the world came in weekly dribblets from the local press, excepting where the great and more stirring events of the day found oral currency through the last arrived mail-guard or coach-whip.

The city was advancing in material interests, in forges, factories, and improved buildings, and generally bid fair to realize prosperity; but it is no less true that the higher educational feeling remained passive, if not unheard. There were no social gatherings, philharmonic or literary, and but few parties for the exchange of the pleasanter amenities of life; and, without a

true spirit of inquiry among young men, emulation stood no need of debating clubs or dialectic societies. The senior citizens discussed passing events in the public-house parlours — the symposiac meetings being conducted under the clamour of "John Barleycorn," and often ending with the chorus—"We'll not go home till morning." Though conviviality, gossip, and political squabbling were marked features in the borough, Carlisle was not without its men of higher feelings and more advanced knowledge. But as isolated plants, however vigorous, can hardly vie with the ranker weeds of many years' possession of the land, so these men, in their schemes for moral and intellectual progress, obtained few listeners and few coadjutors in the overpowering crowd of a clamant mediocrity and a clerical nonchalance. So sparse were the thinkers compared with the multitude, that, taking the general aggregate, the mental culture of the citizens showed little more than a ha'penny worth of bread to a huge Falstaffian load of sack brewed or brandied within the city. "The stocks" and pillory in use at the Town Hall stairs for the reform of "incorrigibles" were typical of the ruling powers—the Justice Shallows and Dogberries in waiting, and not much less indicative of the general sentiment of the city—antiquated, shackled, and dogmatically coerced. The old ruts and thoroughfares wanted macadamization, the narrow portals widened, and the closed alleys broken down for a thoroughly refreshing agency of mind and matter; in short, a plan

of procedure marked by deleting and strongly modifying was needed to modernize the characters of the Border city.

Though Watson had a great desire for information in various walks of learning as well as feeling for high Art, his opportunities of improvement were necessarily limited in Carlisle, and in after years he was known to have expressed himself greatly dissatisfied with the general character of the city. There was but one good collection of pictures—Major Mounsey's—in Carlisle, and perhaps the chief encouragement of Art rested with the Mounsey family with whom Watson was legally associated, and from whom he derived most important aid, both then and in after years. He benefited by his medical and artistic acquaintances, otherwise he was unnoticed by, though it could not be pleaded that he was unknown to, the leading citizens and the Chancellor of the diocese. Had there been any artistic spirit amongst the Carlisle hierarchy, the difference of rank between them and the lawyer's clerk would not have been considered, for in society the most aristocratic in England there is a readiness to fraternize with artists; and not less in Scotland, where every nobleman used to welcome (and probably do still) Horatio Macculloch—the best and noblest of landscape painters.

If a Flaxman in art, a Dalton in science, or an Owen in biology, had appeared in Carlisle, he would have fared no better than Watson, nor would any representative of the same class of

minds receive any greater courtesy now in the "set exclusive," unless primed with a "Low Church" theology, or boasting the accident of a long ancestry,* or looking towards

"An estate, or cash, or country seat,"

—prospects sounding pleasantly in the ears compared with arts, sciences, and physiological discoveries. But if frank welcome were here offered, what would the man of original mind and *status* in science do in society so impoverished—reflecting little more than the petty slanders of the place, picked up by curates, the eavesdroppers and satellites of the presiding "dignitary,"—but doff at once his manly superiority, and descend to puerilities to make himself agreeable to the converse of a deanery, or the dawdling talk and tinselled coterie of a cotton would-be aristocracy. It would be as inapt in society for young intellect to be brought into close relationship with old fogyism, as for a fresh runlet to be drawn into stagnant slimy pools—the *habitat* of *rana* and *infusoria;* and not less incongruous for the psychical growth of adolescence, with a goal beyond in life's ambition, to be tied

* Daniel Defoe, known to civilized life by his "Robinson Crusoe," could not go beyond his grandfather! It is true that he was the greatest prose writer England ever had, and that his fame in the world is only limited by language; moreover, he was the bravest of Englishmen when brave men were needed in the Commonwealth; still, "old family" virtues cannot fail to be shocked at his poor lineage, only a shade better than the Bedford tinker, the author of the "Pilgrim's Progress."

down to the manacled thought and *laissez-faire* of a sixteenth century theological standard, erected by the "bluff Tudor" for other aims and ends than the Biblical and Patristic.

Carlisle, though possessing a richly endowed ministry for the growth and edification of pious natures, unhappily laboured under the common fate of cities narrowed by Churchdom restrictions, overdone by Pauline sermons, and unprovided with healthful or intellectual resources, in containing naughty people of both sexes Watson's art-work brought him in contact with the "free gallants," and, as he had a tolerable vein of satire in his composition, he was tempted, as opportunity offered, to sketch any supercilious official who might have incurred the displeasure of Young Carlisle, *ex. gr.* the puffing sententious alderman, or the pharisaical-visaged pluralist. On one occasion, to indulge the covert wickedness of some "fast friends,"—the abettors of the work,—he went a step beyond the walls for caricature and design, leaving *le monde* within the city precincts for the *demi-monde* outside the western gates; and, with the apparent intention of promoting a scheme of finance between the patrons and the patronised "Paphian," engraved a five-shilling note in the Bank of England style with admirable skill, not bearing, however, the famous "Abraham Newland" token of that day, but the signature of a "Mrs. Quickly," head and hostess of the Carlisle *Cortigiana*. These notes, dangerously imitative of "old Threadneedle Street," created a sensation, and,

being a kind of devil's scrip, rose to a high premium; but luckily the liability of their credit as a circulating medium was limited, passing current along with the *jeu d'esprits* of the month that marked their issue.

Biography cannot separate the man from his civic relations, much less the persons among whom he lived and acted; so that this sketch of the general *status quo* of Carlisle* seemed necessary to indicate the influences surrounding Watson in his adolescence and first trial of urban life. That Watson read and studied, and became imbued with literary tastes, may be inferred from the fact of his joining his friend Robert Abraham in a scheme for the publication of a monthly literary magazine. The two lads went so far as to arrange with a publisher, and to advertise for contributions to their new adventure; but on discovering that a poetical effusion from a love-sick swain was the only proof of literary taste in the county, they prudently abstained from the experiment. In the meantime a satirical paper, highly spiced with scandal, flourished exceedingly.

* The History of Carlisle—as a Roman, Mediæval, and Border city, bold in warfare, lively in politics, and of large and varied relations—would be exceedingly interesting. If Mr. G. G. Mounsey, the able historian of "Carlisle in 1745," could be prevailed upon to work up the valuable materials in his possession, he would add another favour to the many he has already conferred upon his native city, and contribute an important volume to English literature.

Watson had no regard for his law studies, and it was well understood that he would take the earliest chance of escaping from office thraldom. This opportunity came very unexpectedly on the 28th December, 1823, on which day a message from Newcastle-on-Tyne apprised him of his father's death there. His father's remains were interred in Sebergham churchyard, the burial-place of the Watsons. His mother, it may be remarked here, survived his father nearly six years, and died November 27, 1829.

No longer under paternal restraint, the ruling passion of his life asserted its supremacy over all considerations, and led Watson to seek release from the Messrs. Mounsey in January, 1824. For this step, so abrogatory of his three years' study and professional prospects, he incurred no little reproach from his friends, some of whom went so far as to call in question his intellectual capacity for law pursuits, and others comforted him with the Job's solace of having lost the favour of rich relations and *post obit* expectancies—hard blows to the strongest of nerves, but to him of little moment compared with the gratified longings for sculpture. Fired by a natural enthusiasm, he would have laboured with his own hands through a long life in penury for high Art, not giving a sigh for the profession he had quitted, or the fortune it might have brought him. He endeavoured to appease the wrath of his friends, and pleaded, with *nisi prius* skill, that the law was

neither honest in principle nor humane in practice, and that he could not conscientiously pursue it. To a young fellow of poesy and imagination, it is easy to understand how dreary must have been the hours in an attorney's office—to find the dreams of his fancy cobwebbed by the dust of deeds and law-digests, and to see the forms of beauty flitting across his brain and seeking expression on panel or canvas, met by the crooked caligraphy and the dry musty fodder of a fustian verbiage.

Watson had only entered his twenty-first year when he claimed the rights of manhood, sought, and obtained a professional divorce. Every influence was tried to shake Watson in his art-belief, and, as a last resource, his family drew pictures of the future,—the patrimonial possession "how small," the wealth of a maiden aunt "how rich in promise to him" whose name (Lewthwaite) embraced her own. Outside the family circle his abdication of the law was viewed as highly impolitic. Here was a clever youth placed in a respectable position, with the chance of realizing a good thing in the world, casting his law credentials aside, and for what?—a mallet and chisel—hard work and hard pay in preference to soft hands and softer clients. A love of Art for its own sake appeared a mere chimera, and as for "a ruling thought" that might or might not fill the purse—"the veriest nonsense that could enter any man's noddle." Watson seemed to have the hank in his own hand if he would but spin the yarn or weave the cloth. His

reasons for choosing sculpture were ridiculed, as the world around could not see in his apparent waywardness the strong bent of a will ripening into wisdom.

Watson hastened his arrangements for visiting London—a step he had long meditated, in the hope of obtaining academical light and improvement there, and on the Continent. He bid his friends "Good-bye," and his last call was upon a publican, to whose pretty daughter he had for some months been warmly attached. He had to announce to her his intended visit to Rome and his long purposed absence; then came the last words and parting—possibly for years. *Nous verrons.*

CHAPTER III.

THE GENESIS OF ART IN WATSON.

"The childhood shows the man
As morning shows the day."—MILTON.

IT is the settling of Watson by his friends, and his own resettling, which makes his early history deserving of a little attention—being in some measure calculated, if not to "adorn a tale," at least to "point a moral" to the guardians of the future Watsons, should they arise in the Art world of England. His youth was a marked index to his manhood, but his relatives, blind to Nature's indications, laboured to thwart the lad Musgrave, and, in doing so, helped to spoil the man Watson. Had his boyism been studied by the broad light of education, or the particular light derived from a knowledge of man's constitution, his early manifestations would have met with encouragement rather than a hostility amounting to reprobation. When biography marks the dawning influences, or can trace the formative period of a man who has risen from commonplace to superiority, it serves to fill a page

illustrative of individual life, its growth and contingencies; and the writer of this record desires, however imperfectly, to trace that marvellous aptitude for forms in Watson to its real origin, be it deducible from race or education, be it external or collateral, or a ruling faculty in the man himself.

It is an old saying that men are the creatures of circumstances, and where the mind of the youth is little more than a *tabula rasa*, it is no less true than trite; but, as with other established dicta in the common reasonings of the world, not so entirely golden in its application as to be constant and invariable. Early impressions have a potent influence, likewise the paternal occupation or family leanings, in determining many of the ordinary followings of life; it is questionable, however, if the same motives are able to prevail against a strongly-marked trait or feeling reigning in the individual himself, as is evidenced in those cases where the precocious intellect so truly bespeaks the future man, the playful caricature the draughtsman, or the rude clay forms the embryonic modeller. In such examples, and where the youth is able to realize Cicero's words, *ex suis tabulis causam dicere*, the development of character forestalls the wishes of parents, and occasionally becomes too strong a power to be checked or overruled. As children are born dramatists,—mimic performers on the stage of life, now bashful as coy maidens, now bold as impetuous youth, or with corrugated brows imitating the severe looks of an aged

monitor,—so indisputably are the early dawnings of a life where a ruling principle lies within the soul.

The boy Napier, marshalling his fellow juveniles in his father's drawing-room, rises to be the hero of Scinde and the saviour of India; the Glasgow urchin of a boy drawing mathematical lines across the sands of the Broomielaw, becomes the improver of the steam-engine, the great Watt; and so on in history, if not *ad infinitum.*

Watson was brought up in a solitary farmhouse, his birth-place, shaded by ancient yews and lofty elms, with green meadows spread around it. Of healthy animated nature he had enough, and to spare. His daily walks to school afforded him one of the most charming bits of landscape in hill and dale, rich sward graced by ancient forest trees, and between its banks of copse, or the margins of the broader vale, the pebbly stream of Cauda,

> " Now shining, now foaming,
> Now hiding, now roaming,

in its onward descent to the sea;—a well adorned park, where the mediæval ramparts, and ivied towers, and chapel of Rose Castle stood as lordly claimants of the soil; then wooded upland rising above upland, till the highest became merged in the Skiddaw range of mountains, and the line of earth was lost in the grey fleeting clouds, or stood in bold relief against the blue expanse.

The poetical imagination of Watson could not fail to recognise the surpassing beauties of a vale in which his early years were cradled and nurtured; but how far this natural grandeur served to quicken his feeling, or to fix his belief in art, is a question less easily solved, and only soluble on a further consideration of his history viewed in relation to other followers of sculptorial art. Thorvaldsen the Dane was reared in a dirty hovel by the docks of Copenhagen; Canova was cradled in "the City of the Sea," and with the good fortune of looking upon the grand St. Mark's and the palace of the Doges; and Flaxman first saw the light of day in the back shop of a dingy London street, and a sadly delicate Cockney he was. All three were differently placed as to climate and locality, but all three were alike in having art example, however crude, set before them—a circumstance calculated to render comparison between them and the bucolic-nurtured Watson of less avail. It cannot be shown that Watson's initiative in art sprang from the love of external nature and bovine herds, or that Thorvaldsen's was influenced by the Copenhagen "Wapping," its fish-fags and howling dogs; or Canova's by "listening to the song and oar of Adria's gondolier," or Flaxman's by the whirl and excitement of modern Babylon; nor was the art culture of these men in their riper years affected in any noticeable way by their juvenile relations or companionship.

The great excellence of these sculptors—men who in their

times towered like monumental pillars above the dead level of European art,—must be sought for in other directions than family pursuits and home surroundings; as it has a deeper origin in the individual man, his cerebral capacity or endowment. The Racial element—apt to be overlooked in tracing the biographical relations, when in some instances it should be viewed as the *primum mobile*, or special interpretation of a man's *penchant* for art, science, geographical discovery, and the like—had probably more to do in modifying the character of the works of these great masters in art than any indoctrination of the schools—lending sunny grace to the Venetian, and bold, strong features to the Northerners. As Nature, taken in a broad sense, seems to have been inoperative, or, at least, non-inductive of art *per se* in these noted examples—and they are taken at random, without any preconceived opinions on the subject—the writer is thrown back upon the personal relations of Watson for more light and explanation.

On gaining his teens, Watson found an art associate in Schoolmaster Monkhouse, but, beyond receiving approval of his work, he would derive no benefit; moreover, Art proper had only a humble following in the rural classic. Mr. Guy Head, a portrait painter, married into the Watson connexion; and his works, some of which graced Hawksdale Hall, were supposed to have impressed Musgrave. Head's paintings were effective in a way, but those known to the writer glow more in paint than high art, and could

hardly be inspiriting beyond a bucolic circle; moreover, Watson's aim was sculpture-wards, and Head's portraits would fail to be suggestive, much less creative, of ideal forms. Head's copy of Lanfranco's Cleopatra hung in the best parlour of Watson's house, and it is worthy of note here, as illustrating the art-feeling prevailing in the paternal mansion, that the "half-dressed woman," as Cleopatra was designated, shocked old Thomas Watson's delicacy of feeling, and led him to suggest the placing of a fold of muslin over the bosom of the voluptuous Egyptian, so that visitors to the house might not have "to blush at such nakedness." The muslin was adjusted, but old Watson used to say, that as soon as he left the premises, his women-folk drew the curtain aside to look at the "bonny picture," and that they took every opportunity of showing the said picture to their own sex. What an episode of homely delicacy of feeling and of unblushing female curiosity!

Of the influences bearing upon Watson, it may be said, that the *domestic* were totally opposed to and strongly depreciatory of art; the *scholastic* amounted to little more than pleasant acknowledgments; and the *natural*, derived from the scenery of the Cauda, could only improve and beautify the feeling of the youth. Art-love was part of Watson's self; it grew with his growth, and, as it became more and more developed, received support from the association of kindred minds; and here it may be well to inquire into the nature of this faculty for Art, and its expansion under

circumstances calculated to crush rather than to engender its force.

True excellence in art is a rare quality, the possession of which is vainly sought after by the crowds of aspirants who enter the arena of competition, in the belief that art is an educable feeling, to be purchased by time, money, and schooling. No doubt, the faculties of man, like his muscles, may be promoted by exercise and good direction; and industry, persevered in for years, has often measured its lines by the side of a brighter inspiration; but art-culture is not a thing to be planted, nurtured, and ripened at will. Art-feeling is met with under the most variable circumstances; amongst hewers of wood and drawers of water, whose brows bear the dewy drops of toil; in the back shop or on the open sea; within the circle of courts and in the study of philosophers. In this country a portion of the educated class seeks the professions of law and physic, whilst the rank and file of the Church is borrowed from all sorts of men, educated and non-educated; *ex. gr.* "Scripture readers," not gifted with the vernacular, much less the classics, and "literates" (the phrase seems to have been coined for a striking antithesis) lately fashioned into "parsons" by Palmerstonian bishops; but neither schooling nor training, neither probation nor practice, can make an artist of high order—"with brains, Sir!" The true artist, like the true poet, is born, not made; and the artistic germ can no more remain latent

in man than the natural growth of the organism stands still in health, but continually seeks expression in lines, forms, and groups.

Example or precedent could have had little to do with the formation of the first Greek school of Sculpture. There were no foreign academies for ambitious youth to visit, and in which to learn the ingenious arts, or, if there were, history has shown considerable reticence. Egypt, the birthplace of learning, shone less in sculpture than architecture; she furnished history and philosophy to the world, erected the Pyramids, carved the granite monoliths, and left an imperishable colouring upon her temple walls; but the "human form divine" either afforded no art sentiment to the Nilotic race, or, as is more generally supposed, existed only to be sadly vitiated by a conventional ordering of the Priesthood. Her sculpture, like her temples, was on a huge colossal scale, but it wanted grace, portraiture, and nature, and could not have been the stimulus to Phidias, the grand master of Greek art—he who taught his Hellenic brethren, and left legacies of study to them, and to the nations of the East and the West, and to all the races of men. How that single Greek mind came forth, like a mythological god, from a chaos of comparatively rude art, and carved the perfect Apollo figure on the basis of human moulds—in itself a grand conception almost divinely inspired—is a curious anthropological fact, explicable only on the hypothesis

—sought to be established here from a consideration of Watson's life—that art is of no nation and no clime, neither academical nor educational in its rise, development, and grandest phases.

The genius of art seems born with the individual—innate or part of man's genesis—growing, enlarging, and colouring the sentiments of its possessor. As the bud expands under the influence of solar rays, so does art-power spring forth in youth when inspired by the great psychological gift—genius. As man owes all his peculiarities to his cerebral structure, special gifts flow from special developments of the organism. Form, individuality, comparison, and ideality, constitute the particular endowments of the sculptor, and these may be associated with other faculties of the mind, fitting the holder for more pursuits than his own special *forte*. When a marked power predominates in man, other traits of character either become very secondary or sink into abeyance, but the highest art is not incompatible with the highest studies and generalizations; thus Leonardo da Vinci furnished the example of one who was first in every department of knowledge; and the brothers John and Charles Bell, who possessed the finest criticism in art, with almost unrivalled powers of delineation, were surgeons of great eminence—Sir Charles*

* Sir Charles Bell taught anatomy for upwards of twenty years, and illustrated his works by engravings based on his own drawings, and had also written his "Anatomy of Expression," and gained the reputation of being the greatest

also leaving a name only second to Harvey in physiological discovery. The writer's valued friend Edward Forbes,* who was noted for his artistic powers, and would have earned more money by art, had he devoted himself to it, than he did by philosophy, died Professor of Science with European fame. Watson himself, though pre-eminently a sculptor from boyhood, was possessed of superior talents, and might have proved himself in various professional walks as a man of mark.

With a full recognition of all the circumstances attendant on

artistic anatomist of his day; but he did not succeed in his application for the Professorship of Anatomy to the Royal Academy in London. It is said that the only appointment ever denied him, and denied him three times, was this Professorship!

* Whilst studying in the Edinburgh University, Edward Forbes carried a huge note-book filled with sketches, and all the grotesque forms that could be drawn from the study of the animal creation. Nature, in her wildest moods, was no match for Forbes' pencil and wild phantasies—angelic and aërial forms borne along with cirro-stratus clouds, and, in antithesis, elves hoofed and tailed, and entirely diabolical, were seen emerging from Plutonic rocks, or carrying unpopular professors into the caldrons of Hecate. Forbes could dissect and describe the minutest organisms—his scalpel and pencil being alike at command, accurate, and free. His generalizations on the nature of animal and vegetative life ranked with the highest in unravelling creation's mysteries.

The writer craves indulgence for this foot-note to offer, however imperfectly, his tribute of high regard to the memory of his friend and "brother" Forbes, than whom no man ever figured in the annals of science who exhibited more philosophical acumen in natural history, with a more hearty and genial soul and a more honourable and blameless character.

Watson in his rural and urban life up to manhood, there seems no good ground for inferring that his choice of sculpture had any other bias than his own strong impulses. The imitative faculty, well drilled, has occasionally led to no ignoble position in landscape and the painting of still-life; but this will not suffice in the sister art, in which poverty of execution is soon detected, and where excellence as readily stamps itself on the work. The daub of paint may give effect, however crudely, but the chisel has no such channels of escape; there can be no gloss thrown over sculptorial art—it is either good, or bad, or, worst of all, indifferent, and there it remains unalterable. The moulding of form in its true significance indicates a high *status* in art; and the sculptor, with any pretensions to success, is required to possess a general knowledge of anatomical relations, or a correct outline and aptitude for form, a balancing power of eye as well as judgment to make the whole consonant with its parts. That higher excellence termed "first rank" is only attainable by the sculptor in full endowment of the imaginative faculty, a refined and classical taste, accurate perceptions of character for portraiture, and these again supplemented by what is aptly termed fine feeling—the crowning capital of all. Watson, at a very early period, showed some of these qualifications, though labouring under the disadvantage of wanting examples for study. Statuary was hardly known in Cumberland, and there was but

one work worthy of the name when Watson was a student; but this one of rare and beauteous excellence was Nollekens' masterpiece, and is still to be seen in Wetheral Church, five miles from Carlisle.* It was not the force of public exhibitions or private collections of art that induced Watson to throw aside the legal profession and all its prospects. The germ of art lay within the man himself as a constitutional *nidus*, and, like other germs, whether for good or evil, it pushed forward its claims in the great current of thought which sweeps so strongly onwards as boyhood is being ripened into puberty and adolescence. Amidst the emotions struggling to be set free at this critical period of life, *ex. gr.* the higher sentiments of love and friendship, art-culture manifested itself, *vis naturalis et insita*, as a vivid expansive feeling that grew in force like an unchecked impetus in physics till it became the *beau idéal* in Watson's mind—the Alpha and Omega of his life.

* The work alluded to in the text is a monument erected by the late excellent Mr. Howard, of Corby Castle, to his first wife's memory. A lady, the portraiture of chastened feeling and beauty, her new-born babe, and an angelic form, constitute this monumental group. A tenderness and an exalted spirituality reign through the composition of the work, so impressive and heart-touching.

A former curate of Wetheral used to give Chantrey the credit of this nobly-executed work! He had not heard of Nollekens. So much for fame amongst the ignorant, collegiate or non-collegiate!

CHAPTER IV.

LONDON AND THE CONTINENT.

LOVE EPISODE—FLAXMAN AND THE ACADEMY—FLORENCE, ROME, AND NAPLES—LOST AND FOUND—THE SHY GERMAN—ILLNESS—SUPPOSED DEATH—LIFE MODELS—POMPEIAN VAGABONDISM.

ON the February morning (1824) of Watson's departure from Carlisle, it rained heavily, and was dark—the coach lamps by the Bush Hotel being the only light, as the folk around them were the only signs of life, in the city. He took his coach seat outside, amidst plaided and muffled-up passengers. Daylight brought about a recognition more or less of the travelling party, with the exception of a lady closely veiled and silent, who, on the coach stopping for change of horses and breakfast, alighted, but stood aloof from the rest of the company. A Carlisle draper seeing an unprotected female, pressed her to have some tea and toast, and Watson, with the gallantry of youth, suggested her coming to the fire, and the removal of her wet garments; she complied, and to his astonishment he saw in the *incognita* of the coach group his "lady-love." Here was surprise and dilemma, increased by

the fact that the draper knew Watson, and saw in the girl one of his dressmaker customers! "What possessed her? Would she not return?" and looks more inquiring than words showed on Watson's countenance;—in vain the appeals,—the die was cast, and for ever.

The fair Helen had her replies ready, or she would not have crossed the Rubicon that stormy morning. Her mind was made up, and go she would; so they journeyed onwards to London, where, being without friends, the young couple, possessing brave hearts, vowed eternal love, and were yoked together for better or for worse—not, however, by the orthodox forms of the Church, but in the style of Dean Swift, euphemistically called a left-hand marriage. As Anna Maria, the warm-hearted spouse of Magnani, threw herself on the protection of Thorvaldsen, so did the Carlisle maid trust her honour to the love and confidence of Watson. In the English instance, love was the only bond as it was the only dowry, and the parties lived happily together, and neither banns nor rituals could have secured more.

This marriage *de convenance* having settled love affairs, Watson sought an interview with Flaxman for advice and direction in his studies. Flaxman spoke of the steep hill to be ascended, in the very foreground of Art, the arduous labour required, the years of toil and poor recompense, the lack of patrons,—in short, said all he could to discourage the young Cumbrian. Watson,

having listened to the end of this unacceptable exhortation, replied, that were he going to apprentice himself to a linendraper, he would have to serve seven years, but he would give ten years to Art; that he had forsaken his law studies, and was prepared to meet every privation, to sacrifice ease and patrimony for the love of Sculpture, to which he was bound, now and for ever. This Spartan declaration showed what kind of man he was, and elicited the following from Flaxman:—"That will do, young man, that will do; with such determination as yours, and a good taste for Art, I have no doubt you will succeed, as all men do who devote heart and soul to their work." He then gave Watson advice as to the Royal Academy, showed him some of his own works, and kindly invited him to return to his studio whenever he felt disposed.

It could hardly be through Flaxman that Watson went to Mr. Sievier, and agreed to give him £60 for some months' instruction, and with whom he saw something of modelling and the preparatory steps of Art; but the schooling was not to Watson's mind: it was too limited in character, and savoured of an apprenticeship, so he left it before the fulfilment of the term agreed upon. Watson had exalted notions of Art, so that tuition based on mechanical routine was sure to be felt as irksome. Whilst in Cumberland he had often longed for London and the inspiriting influences of academical study, and fancied

that all men engaged in sculpture must necessarily be of lofty sentiment and classical taste; instead of which, he found, as he believed, a shopocratic element as strong in the studios as in the marts of the city. If Art had no significance but money and material interests, he thought he might as well have continued at his office desk, learning the sophistry of the law, and pocketing the fees of unwilling clients.

Amongst Sievier's pupils was Mr. Woodington, with whom Watson soon fraternized, and from whom he derived much information and help as a senior pupil. Mr. Woodington relates that on one occasion, when Watson and he had been working for hours, he proposed taking luncheon, but Watson refused to leave the work, as he had not succeeded to his satisfaction. Woodington went to lunch, and on his return found his little friend stretched on the floor—having fainted from complete exhaustion. Up again and at work, Watson was determined to finish the part that had baffled him. This was the first indication of Watson's feeble heart, and the long day's work was no less indicative of his indomitable will and enthusiasm. Often in after years, his brain power was held in check by his heart's inability to meet the extravagant demands made upon its functions.

The subject of his probationary work for admission to the Royal Academy was a "Shepherdess," that received the commendation of Flaxman. Watson was not a zealous pupil of the

Academy, but regular at a students' school of Art got up by a few young sculptors for mutual improvement. During the summer he must have laboured pretty closely, as the second Carlisle Exhibition opened in September, 1824, and contained no less than five of his works; viz. three bas reliefs: 1. Adoration, a Roman head; 2. Melpomene, a study; 3. A Nymph, partly taken from the remains of an ancient Athenian altar; 4. Cupid bearing down the arms of Mars, an *alto-relievo* from an antique tripod in the British Museum; and 5. Cupid and Psyche engraved in outline, and this appears to have been taken from Canova's work, so highly extolled and so voluptuously described by Isabella, Countess Albrizzi.

During the autumn he engraved a good deal on copper, and copied some famous Dutch etchings—considered to be of value by competent judges. Being unsettled by his separation from Sievier, his longings for Rome increased, and, as Flaxman approved of the step, he took a few lessons in French and Italian, and in the autumn of 1825 started for Paris—vowing to several friends in London that he would not speak a word of English till his return.

After studying in the Louvre for a few weeks, less pleased than he hoped to be, he crossed the Alps to Milan to see the grand work of Leonardo da Vinci. The "Last Supper" in the refectory of Santa Maria della Grazia has attracted more visitors than

any single work in existence. Watson saw in its decay the majesty of Art, and the lofty genius of the artist*—an incomparable man even in Italian history.

On reaching Florence a new light dawned upon Watson. He was charmed with the city and environs, the Arno and Apennines, and not less delighted with the architectural remains of the Middle Ages as seen in the public halls and palaces. Florence, truly "*la bella*" in Art treasures, in paintings, sculpture, cameos, medals, and bronzes, and not less in showing the best of Italian mediævalism, is a focus of attraction to the learned and curious of all nations. There, in her grand city halls, where liberty had its struggles and freedom, not seldom its defeats, as well as its victories, are the marble busts and portraits of the men of a renowned Italy, suggestive alike of hero-worship and reverence—there, in churches repose the dust of a glorious dead memorialized as befits the sons of immortality by a grateful people. To the high imagination of Watson, what city could furnish subjects more fascinating to the mind than Florence? He enjoyed history;—

* Who could vie with Da Vinci? so famous in every branch of Art, so apt in anatomy and biology, so conversant with languages, music, and poesy, so educated in geometry and astronomy. His claims to distinction as the man of his epoch were almost universal; even in horsemanship and in "a passage at arms" he was unmatched. Not only does Da Vinci appear to have been the most cultivated man of his time, but probably the greatest man antecedent to his own in knowledge, in breadth of art, and the higher philosophy.

there, untold manuscripts and archives fraught with age, Galilean science, and chivalrous interest fill the muniments;—there, history is unfolded in every street and state building—the history of revolutions—the intrigues of Courts—the rivalries of men, and these men the Macchiavellis and Medicis. He was fond of poesy and literature, and there, the air is largely redolent of both these delights to cultured minds; whilst among the loftiest representatives of Italian poesy, the mind clings to one above all others—the glorious Dante, whose pictures of the terrific and the sublime have won a world's applause. Watson above all things was devoted to Art,—the child of his fancy and the idol of his worship; and there, Art flourished with marked, if not unrivalled exuberancy. Standing in the open square near the grand old palace—architecturally unrivalled, with its lofty overhanging tower as if "built in the air," he had before him the Loggia de' Lanzi with its "Perseus," its "Dying Ajax," and its "Sabine Group," and close by, the Gallery of the Uffizi with its niched aërial court containing statues and portrait memorials of world-famed Italians; and, not far distant from these edifices, the Grand Duomo, Campanile, and Baptistery—the gates of which conferred immortality on the names of Andrea Pisano, Giotto, and Ghiberti.

And if, under the fair sky of Italy, Florence showed such charming features in her architectural phases and embellishments,

and such nobly sculptured works—the emblems of a true national patriotism—

> "There be more things to greet the heart and eyes,
> In Arno's dome of Art's most princely shrine,
> Where Sculpture with her rainbow sister vies;
> There be more marvels yet:"

for, in the Pitti and Uffizi palaces, works of endless beauty adorn the galleries, from the gilded halos marking the earliest Christian art—the offspring of a reverential feeling, if a gaudy imitation of saints—through the Raphaels and the Titians down to the last specimen of modern painting.

To the lover of Art in its highest sense, to the classical and mediæval scholar, and to the man of education—tourist or traveller—Italy everywhere affords space and verge enough for historical study and political generalizations. No city, however, amidst the Mediterranean group stands more favoured than Florence in its architecture,—mediæval churches, palaces, and halls; its indescribable Art glories, its grand historical names, and no less grand historical data. How much the Fine Arts owe to Florence!—to say nothing of the three greatest names in the world of Art, associated with its local history, and familiar to everybody: there Music obtained its first *operatic* expression, and copper plates were for the first time printed from, giving rise to engraving elsewhere, and the revivalism of decoration; in short, the great impetus in every direction of Art (after the dark ages) rose in

Florence, and speedily spread over Italy and Europe. By the banks of the Arno had been located the men of science, the learned schoolmen, the great artists, the military rulers, and political regenerators of a grand epoch; and Watson, possessing a fair share of patriotism, had his inner soul stirred in contemplating the history of the city of Michael Angelo, Dante, and Galileo. He saw with pleasure the honours and homage paid by the Florentines to their representative men—noting especially the busts of those who had given immortality to Italian art, and felt the contrast—too marked—of this high appreciation with England's neglect of her aristocracy of intellect. In London, statues of imbecile, dethroned, and riotous kings stride the thoroughfares, and foreigners look in vain for the sculptured portraits of England's greatest sons,—its Bacon, Newton, Shakespeare, Cromwell, and Raleigh.

Watson next went to Rome, where he remained two years, earnestly occupied in studying languages along with his more absorbing Art. Like many who had preceded him, he saw the insignificance of modern Art compared with the antique, and, in studying the latter, he learned that wholesome lesson to young minds—his own deficiencies, and the no less imperative need of continuous labour to obtain even a modicum of success. Pleased with the Art galleries of the Vatican and Capitol, he felt more strongly than ever the imitative and formal character of English

sculpture, and sought to shake off the feebleness of his own nationality in Art, by an earnest study of the Greek and other standard models. In proof of his earnestness, he eschewed Englishmen of all grades and societies, and was altogether unknown to his compatriots, artistic and *dilettanti*, in Rome;—an immense advantage to his intellectual culture, his linguistic acquirements, and Art education.

Having left his Cumbrian relatives in something like a pet, owing to their continued discouragement and refusal of money supplies, Watson gave them no intimation of his whereabouts on the Continent, and it was only from others that they learned his intention of going to Rome. As Mr. Dunbar, sculptor, was journeying to Italy on business, Watson's friends begged him to find out Musgrave, and report to them of his position if alive, or, as they feared, his death. Mr. Dunbar, after some weeks in Rome, searching everywhere in the studios, cafés, and other rendezvous of artists, without obtaining the slightest tidings of the Carlisle youth, began to think that the conjectures of his Cumbrian friends were correct. At length, in conversation with a French sculptor —who recognised in the description of Watson a person who frequented the German café, and appeared as a student of the "Fatherland"—Dunbar fancied that he had got a clue to "the vagabond," though the Frenchman protested against the notion of the "little fellow" having a particle of "John Bull" in his nature

—"only a shy German." After further inquiries Watson was found in an apartment of a dilapidated palace, under the care of an old woman, who had nursed him through a malaria fever, but who had also, from too hasty zeal in his soul's behalf, or his body's interment, or perhaps both, nearly involved him in an earthly purgatory. The fever had brought Watson to so very low an ebb, that he seemed to have swooned away, and the old nurse, seeing no movements of the chest and nothing marked of life, called in the neighbours to help her to wail over the departed! The party assembled never thought of testing the presence of life, but at once proceeded with the usual ceremonies for the dead, and instituted a procession of candle-bearers with Madonnas and saints, preparatory to the last requiem! Watson awoke in the midst of the hubbub and paraphernalia for his *soul's* solace, and begged in feeble accents a little more consideration for his *body's* wants. A voice from the supposed cadaver caused a horrid amazement amongst the bystanders, whose loud and repeated invocations of the Virgin —"*Sancta*," "*Sanctissima*," and wild gesticulations, had the happy effect of saving the frail mortal from being coffined, whilst the ludicrousness of the scene gave a hearty fillip to his further restoration.

Watson's preference for the students of France and Germany arose from two circumstances. *First*, they lived more cheaply, and got more for their money, than English artists, and economy

suited his finances; *secondly*, he wished to know foreign languages, and this was almost impossible if he associated with his countrymen. He had evidently made good progress with the German, to be taken for one of the nation amongst the artistic circles. Being thrown amongst the English in various ways, he had great fun in listening to their conversation and brag, and used to relate in after years, with no little glee, many droll stories pertaining to their "high falutin," as well as the "tall talk" of our American cousins. How well he had hidden his own nationality has already been shown, and it only remains to be said that he devoted himself thoroughly to work, entered no places of amusement, and sought no acquaintance; his society was Art, and his love was Art. In one of his letters to his friend Robert Abraham, in 1827, he writes—"I laughed at your letter advising me about religion, politics, and women. The first I know nothing of, and care as little; the second never enters my head; and the skirts of the ladies I never touch. I do not wish to partake of the follies, foibles, and vices of the people with whom I come in contact, but to benefit all in my power professionally."

Watson's pecuniary resources were not so abundant as to permit his living in a foreign city without some sacrifices and exertions on his own behalf; and if any student in Rome was cut out for work to suit the varied taste of connoisseurs and purchasers, surely Watson was, for he could etch, carve, design for cameos,

or produce water-colour drawings, and with a facility of execution that few of his rivals could surpass. His personal expenses were trifling, and, being indifferent to dress, he soon fell into the free and easy mode of his café associates, with clothes unbrushed, bare, and not always continuous in surface, semi-slouching hat, or wide awake—a kind of uncombed exterior that characterises the *genus* artist—Celt or Teutonic—congregated near the Piazza di Spagna.

Knowing the facilities that Rome afforded, Watson sought out the best "life models," and was fortunate enough to secure the services of Canova's favourite as a female study. No one conversant with sculptorial art doubts the value and appropriateness of the living figure as an adjunct to its cultivation; yet what prudish talk is heard in the evangelical coteries of England on this subject! The beauty, grace, and delicate organism of the human female—the noblest of God's works, and the cause of inspiration to Greek, Roman, and modern Art—is to be robed and smothered in millinery rather than man should study man's image, and convey to others æsthetic pleasures.* With the

* The preaching against the study of the "nude" commenced with Savonarola—Dominican, politician, and pseudo-prophet—towards the close of the 15th century; and Fra Bartolommeo della Porta, aiming at the expression of religious feeling in Art, thought it prudent to burn his sketch-books, to appease the arch-priest of San Marco. Little more was heard on this subject till the middle of the 19th century, when the feeble Bishops of England, afraid that man should be seen in all his proportions, in the marble, revived the

anatomist, as with the artist, the nude figure appears but a demonstration of form; the sculptor looks at the general contour, special developments, undulations, and lines, and seeks to imitate them, like the Greeks of old, whose study of life led to such unrivalled excellence in Art. Without the living figure, contemplated in pose and in action, in its attitude of grace, in its breathing sentiment of the emotions and passions, the sculptor cannot realize the animated form, much less convey to others the soul-like expression of the higher humanity. Every great school of sculpture has rested its chief foundation on nature and the imitation of the living model, and deterioration has marked the neglect of the one, or the abandonment of the other. The nude, or semi-nude of the palestra of the Greeks, offered a fine exhibition of nature's moulds. Indeed, Paganism and the palestra were the grand aids to sculpture, quite as much so, if not vastly more than Christianity, with all its high and ennobling sentiments, has been enabled to effect since the revival of letters, and the dawn of a civilization based on a loftier appreciation of creative beneficence. It is a mistake to suppose that the

preaching, *quoad* the undraped statues of the Great Exhibition of 1851, and, wishing for what Milton described as—

"Shows instead, mere shows of seeming pure,"

carried the fig-leaf ornament against Art—the only laurel, as far as history records, gained by the prelacy in that year of grace!

passions are excited by the nude figure, as the free exposure of the person rather tends to destroy, whilst a casual or stolen glance excites the feelings. The coy maiden, half shrinking, yet more than half covetous, the thinly-veiled bosom, and crinoline adjustments of modern dress, are creative dangers compared with which the nude figure is chastity itself.* This was well understood a century ago by Lady Mary Montagu; and Jean Jacques Rousseau, no mean judge of the relations of the sexes, observes, "that the most faultless and exquisite form loses nothing of its powers of fascination by being partially and indistinctly seen; the lover's fancy depicts what is hid from the eye in beauties co-equal, if not superior, to perfection itself."

Watson's vow not to speak English during his absence was faithfully kept for months, and only broken under a severe trial of his temper by some English visitors, who, walking into the studio where he was engaged, and taking him for "a foreigner," began to criticise his work with no little freedom and unfairness. This was too much for Watson, so he stepped forward between his work and his own countrymen, and, posing himself in the attitude of offended dignity, said, "Pray, ladies and gentlemen, who were

* The many admirers of Baily's "Eve at the Fountain," are not aware that the pleasure they derive from the work rests on the fact of a "life-model" not objecting to a cast being taken of her entire person—hence the beauty of the work, a fine woman, faithfully rendered by Art.

your teachers, that you have become such learned critics?" This was Watsonian reproof, with an emphasis. He did comparatively little in the marble, and seems to have been more absorbed in studying for the future than in doing permanent work for himself and others in Rome. The constancy of his labours impaired his health, and drove him to a village by the Sabine Hills, whither he was accompanied by an Italian worker in cameos. The two artists worked well together—Watson devising and drawing for his friend's carving. The cameos were admirably executed, and obtained good prices at Rome. Watson brought several to England, some of which were bestowed on friends, and others were disposed of for large sums.

He spent some time in Naples, apparently enlivened with the bay, its isles, and the grand scenery along its shores—the *diversorium* of Roman vices in the time of Seneca, and to-day a paradise for painters possessed of true feeling and powers of colouring—and pleased to recall the historical associations of a district linked with the life and writings of Virgil, the rural retirement of Cicero, the holiday-making of Horace, the court and grandeur of Augustus, the voluptuousness of the patricians and the *ambubajæ;* as if these classical features, human and topographical, offered greater invitation to his fancy than the strictly artistic—the "Toro Farnese," the "Wounded Gladiator," and other choice works in the Museo Borbonico.

He took up his quarters for two or three weeks by the base of Vesuvius, possibly with the view of studying the art and ruins of Pompeii, or, not unlikely, to indulge in a little proletarian vagabondage—so befitting the natural history (genus *homo*) of the district. Some of his sketches of brigand-groups would imply an acquaintance with the physiognomy, dress, and habits of the *chevaliers d'industrie* who frequent the Salerno and Pæstum Road, or hang by the outskirts of Itri and Fondi—types of Marco Sciarro and Fra Diavolo.

Being a shrewd observer, and not less a thinker and reasoner, Watson could not fail to institute historical comparisons in a country so largely historical as Italy; and his love and book-knowledge of Republican Rome made the contrast between the grandeur of the classical past and the *régime* of the Papal present all the more visible to him. In the "S.P.Q.R." (*Senatus populusque Romanus*) inscribed on the public edifices, and marking a glorious epoch in Roman history, he saw how obsolete had become their meaning, unless as damnatory evidence of Rome's decline and fall; whilst the *Civis Romanus sum*, once of mighty import, is now lost to the nation of its birth, and *Civis Britannicus*, whose savage ancestors Imperial Cæsar sought to crush, reigns in his place, and over a larger geographical area. Since Watson's visit, forty years ago, matters have not improved by the banks of the Tiber: the descendants of the once noble Roman are crowed over in the

Capitol by "Gallic cocks," or trampled over by red-stockinged cardinals; and, to crown all, whilst an "Index Expurgatorius" rules their literature and limits their thoughts, an "Encyclical Letter" has become the Magna Charta of their liberties!

Watson turned homewards early in 1828, and his observations led him to say, that painters should go to Florence, and sculptors to Rome, whilst poets should reside in Naples during the winter, and spend their summer on the Alpine regions.

CHAPTER V.

HOME AGAIN AND DISAPPOINTMENTS—BUSTS, MONUMENTAL AND OTHER WORKS FOR CUMBERLAND—CARLISLE EXHIBITION (1828)—"THE FATES," "CLYTIA," "IRIS," "HAGAR AND ISHMAEL"—THE DEAN OF CARLISLE'S PATRONAGE OF ART!

ON his return to London, Watson sought out his friend Woodington, and lived with him for some months—conversing largely on Art, and on what he had seen in his travels, but showing no signs of settling down to earn the fame so much longed for and dwelt upon. Woodington advised him to get an engagement in one of the London studios, and make himself known, as no doubt Flaxman would have counselled him; but Watson, though he could not gainsay the fact that, as long as there was no public recognition of Art in the country, young men must necessarily work in the studios of those who held the patronage, took offence at his friend's kindness. Watson talked more like an amateur rich in the world's goods than a man dependent on Art for his living, and boldly declared that he would not degrade himself by working for others as long as he had a penny in his pocket.

After this "brush" with Woodington, he went down to Cumberland to deliver a commission, and to erect a monumental tablet; also to try and obtain more money—the sinews of Art as well as of war—from his relations.

His friends at Hawksdale and Carlisle joyfully welcomed him, and relatives "grat to see the lad return," with all his travelling recollections fresh, and talk wondrously improved, showed him so much kindness that he, calculating on this pleasant change of feeling, thought of residing in Carlisle—for a time at least. A large barn was taken in the suburbs, and he was about to heighten its walls to receive a colossal work when he made the painful discovery that his rich aunt was not disposed to open her purse-strings on his behalf. The design that had occupied his thoughts in Rome—a grand colossal one—could not be developed without resources; and as by this time he had made considerable inroads into his patrimony, his aunt's refusal was felt most keenly—a death-blow to his hopes of realizing a position amongst his kinsmen by the banks of the Cauda. However disappointing to Watson, it was well that his mind had to revert southwards, or he might have run the risk of falling to the level of the puny provincialisms of Art—a sort of hybrid between sculpture and polished stone-masonry—to suit his Cumbrian patrons. Without a field for liberal culture, or the emulation arising from the associations of nobler natures, the provincial

citizen is apt to measure the world by his own petty standard, and to regard the higher interests of mortality as of no more import than the squabbles of a parish vestry, or a Moot Hall council. Small communities have a tendency to dwarf the powers of intellect, and to mar the enthusiasm of genius. Large cities are essential to men of large minds, large ambitions, and large enterprise. So Watson was wise in his determination to return to London; and if Carlisle lost in fame by the departure of the only man that ever possessed a true sculptorial power within her boundaries, Art herself gained considerably by his self-banishment, and might have gained immeasurably more by judiciousness on the part of the sculptor himself.

During his stay in Carlisle, he executed a bust in marble of Dr. John Heysham, the famous naturalist, and author of the Carlisle Bills of Mortality. This work, being well done, gave great satisfaction to the Heysham family. As a first attempt at portrait-busts it augured well for Watson's success; and an examination of it to-day would be likely to surprise those of his London friends who looked upon him, and justly, as less proficient in busts than other departments of his art.

He was not so fortunate in his dealings with another Carlisle physician, who had given him a commission for a small work to be executed at Rome. Watson carved an allegorical figure there, and brought it to Carlisle for "the friend of the family." As

Watson was unpacking the figure, the Doctor asked its price, and then said he did not understand the subject, and refused to fulfil his obligation. Watson felt chagrined by such treatment from a professed friend, and, feeling sure that niggardliness dictated the refusal, packed up the figure, and on leaving the house could not resist a home-thrust at the Doctor, by saying, "Sir, you would like to purchase works of art as you would buy so much butcher's meat—by size and weight. I expected nothing better of you."

Watson's first work in the marble for his native county is to be seen on the east wall of the church at Raughton Head, and within a few yards of the school he attended. It consists of a small *alto-relievo* figure of a student meditating—the head looking downwards, and resting on his right hand, the left holding a book—and is dedicated to the memory of his schoolmaster, the Rev. R. Monkhouse, who died in 1822. The work is simple and expressive, and, as Monkhouse was a scholar and man of thought, withal appropriate. A first public effort, and that so successful, made a good impression on his Cumberland friends, and a notion was pretty generally entertained that the boy whose carvings on knife-handles were familiar to the neighbourhood, might become "a kind of genius, after all."

His second work in the marble also graces a church interior—that of Sebergham, the parish church of his forefathers, and is

of a different stamp from the preceding both in character and conception. It is an allegorical work of some pretensions, and, if entirely original, betokening great merit in so youthful a sculptor as Watson was at Rome. On a large memorial tablet to his father, Watson carved a bas-relief, showing the profiles of three female heads of varied expression, highly wrought, and eminently Grecian in type. The first of these heads, the one in advance, is covered with a veil, so that but little of the hair is visible; the second or central one shows that of a fillet or band crossing the forehead; and the third wears an allegorical helmet: in both these latter, the hair in semi-waved locks is streaming wildly backwards. There is nothing of the corporeity exhibited,—only the heads, portions of the neck, and arms of these apparently aërial forms. The central one has a forefinger to her closed lips, the others have their arms and fingers extended, and all three with eyes deeply set and deeply intent on space beyond—that unknown space, Eternity. A very diminutive winged orb is seen in the high foreground, and Watson's name and "Rome" inscribed below, so that the date of the work is established.

There is a spirit in the treatment of the work that would indicate an experienced hand, and one familiar with the mythologies of Art. Watson had evidently risen at this early period of his career to a true poetic sentiment; he little dreamt, however, that this tribute of respect to his father's memory

would induce so much speculation and talk, and that a cloud of mystery would hang over the "Tria Fata." The meaning of these heads and "long locks," outlined arms, and fingers pointing "nowhere," was a problem to the Seberghamites, who put various odd interpretations upon the work. An inscription from the Greek Testament, appropriate to his father's sudden call, by no means increased the facilities for comprehending the nature of the memorial, but tended greatly to the contrary. The church-goers of the hamlet not being able to enter into the sentiments of the sculptor, or to read the writing on the wall, were disposed to adopt the language of "Rare Ben," in his "Alchymist:"—"Here's now mystery and hieroglyphic;" but, as any explanation is better than none, some hazarded the opinion that the group represented

> "The weird sisters, hand in hand,
> Posters of the sea and land."

Others, of a more benign turn of mind, thought them angels aiming towards Paradise; whilst the orthodox few conceived the three figures to be a proper embodiment of the "Trinity of the Godhead," and with these good folk there was happily no mystery at all—so easily does faith solve difficulties, that the "Destinies," or worship of a Greek mythology, can be accepted in the course of time as symbols of an Athanasian creed!

"The Fates" are capable of great latitude of treatment in Art; and Watson, wishing to send an original work to the Royal Academy, left the beaten path, and eschewed the emblems of the well-known Fates of the Pantheon—Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos. If he had made the "Norns" of the Scandinavian—the three sister goddesses Werd, Werdend, and Should—the basis of his work, his treatment would have shown less of the Hellenic and more of the Teutonic. Guided by the Greek spirit, however, and finer faith, all that is osseous and terrific is avoided by Watson, and only the shadowy forms presented—a kind of poetical abstraction impelled by a mighty Numen, Necessity, who in classical language ruled everywhere, *super Olympum, et super terram.* Theoretically, the ideas of the sculptor may be traced to the Pythagorean philosophy, or the mystical cycle of the three lives set forth in the poetical cosmogony of Pindar—the vigil of the soul during the body's sleep being typified in the central figure of Watson's Fates.

"Dash we the cup of pity to the tomb,
And quaff our fill of desolation, ere
The Morning breaks in brightness o'er the Earth,
And deems us darkness to approaching day!
Oh never cease to snap the fatal thread,
But gorge and glut beyond satiety—
The blood of lovely Woman—giant Man—
And choke the breath of sleeping Innocence!
Waft we along the Alpine pinnacles,

Breathing destruction through the vacant air,
And, as the lightning of imperial Jove,
Bury ten thousand in oblivion!"

Though Watson was idle on his first return to England, he must have resumed his former industry to have sent so many works to the Carlisle Exhibition of 1828. Of these were three sketches in water colours and oils, of persons and scenes drawn from Anderson's Cumberland ballads, and which sculpture could not possibly reach, *ex. gr.* "Borrowdale Jwohny," "Bleckell Murryneet," and "Codbeck Weddin,"—all subjects well calculated to elicit his love of fun and the fell-side customs. The writer would gladly know something of the mode in which Watson treated

"Their kisses just soun like the sneck of a yett,"

and that Bacchanalian episode—"the Weddin Fray," where

"Ned Bulman wad feight wid Gworge Goffet,
Peer Gwordy he nobbit stript thin,
He luik'd leyke a cock out o' fedder,
And suin gat a weel blacken'd skin."

In sculpture he had the busts of Dr. Heysham and Major Hodgson; studies of "Happiness" and "Simplicity," all in marble; a sketch in terra-cotta of the Madness of Hercules, taken from Euripides, also the Fates and Clytia in marble.

The nymph Clytia, in marble, was done for his valued friend Mr. G. G. Mounsey, of Carlisle. Clytia is a 12-inch figure, full and round, in the act of stepping down to the sea, as befitted the daughter of Oceanus. The figure is semi-draped, the right hand holding the dress across the bosom, leaving the folds of drapery to hang gracefully over the lower part of the body, whilst the left hand keeps the garment from incommoding the movements of the limb; and it is this freedom of action, along with a modest hiding of what should not be disclosed, which gives a charm to Clytia. The head is Grecian, and the hair, thrown upwards from the temples, is effective in showing the face, whilst the semi-waved profusion of hair down the back aptly completes the nymph character. The spinal region seems to have been well studied—the curves and poise of the figure being ably set forth; and altogether the work is highly creditable—realizing the

> ". . . fair and sumptuous,
> Without one jot of prodigality
> In form or feature. Soft in step—
> More gentle than in earliest infancy—
> She winds a garment round her lovely limbs,
> And like a minstrel chants away existence."

He was solicited to model the Clytia on a large scale, and to make it an academical study of natural as well as classical

art; but as he grew to manhood, his more youthful efforts found less favour in his eyes, and Clytia remained *in statu quo.*

For the same patron, Mr. Mounsey, Watson made a bronze figure of Iris, in the attitude of flying, or "Iris changing into a rainbow." In her left hand, extended upwards, Iris holds a small emblem like a flower—indicative of spring; in her right hand she holds a jug—symbolizing the outpouring of Jupiter's gifts to man, or the highly pluviose condition with which she has been credited as one of the Oceanides. The figure presents all the feminine characteristics, with sweeping lines and full development, and the drapery below the loins bold and flowing; but the general effect of the work is hardly so pleasing—attributable in part to the rarity of the style, and the difficulty of reconciling a sort of flying extension with the narrowed basis upon which the figure is fixed.

"The Dream of Io," in the possession of Mr. James Heysham, of Borren's Hill, near Carlisle, is an *alto-relievo*, representing Io asleep, and angelic forms around her. This figure attracted attention in the Royal Academy. His "Night," another *alto-relievo*, is less worthy of commendation.

His model of "Hagar and Ishmael," considered clever and promising, was done in 1829, and was shown in the Carlisle Exhibition in 1830, along with a bronze statue of Sigismunda, which was highly praised by London critics when shown in the

metropolis, and did not seem to have been forgotten in the short biographical notices of Watson in 1847. Along with these and the Iris was a miniature bronze gilt statue of Napoleon, of which the writer knows nothing beyond the record in the Carlisle Exhibition catalogue.

Watson had been desired to show his "Hagar and Ishmael" to the Dean of Carlisle at his town residence; for in addition to the Deanery of Carlisle, and the enjoyment of other pluralities, Dr. Hodgson, D.D. was Rector of St George's, Hanover Square, and mingled with the aristocracy—vieing with great houses in purple and gold, and not less deserving the title of a class—

". . . Fruges conjumere nati."

Watson described his reception and treatment by the said Dean in the following words:—"I never met with so mean a person as Dean Hodgson in my life.* He asked me the price of the group. I said, 'Ten guineas.' 'Oh dear! ten guineas; nonsense,—far too much!' Well, then he would have a cast.

* Dean Hodgson's appreciation of art had a parallel in the English prelate who declared that a pin-maker was a more valuable member of society than Raphael. How different in the past, when Polygnotus, the painter of the "Triumph of Miltiades," and the "Victors of Marathon," in encaustic, so delighted his countrymen, that they offered to reward him to his heart's content, but he nobly declined asking anything; thereupon the Amphictyonic Council proclaimed that he should be maintained at the public expense wherever he went.

'What was the price?' 'Four guineas, painted and finished as the original.' 'Oh, how extravagant! But bring one.' So I did, but previously called upon Mr. Chantrey and Mr. Cunningham, and showed it to them. The group met with Mr. Chantrey's entire approbation, and he treated me in the most kind manner, and told me to send it to the Exhibition of the Royal Academy. I then went to the Dean, and left the group for five or six days at his house, but his answer was—'The thing is not worth anything of the kind—four guineas, far too much!' I said nothing, because I am like the Athenian who could not kick the world to one side unless he had a place to set his back against, but I could have said a truth not entirely pleasant to one who had given me ten days' labour without recompense."

CHAPTER VI.

LONDON FROM 1829 TO 1839.

THE STUDIOS—QUARRELS WITH CHANTREY—POLITICAL SKETCHES—BEHNES AND ST. PAUL'S—HOW TO TREAT A BORE—TERRA-COTTA WORKS—"BE IT DEATH OR SLEEP—LYING IN LOVELINESS."

WATSON'S first London studio was in Rathbone Place, where he modelled a few things, but received no commissions of any note; he then changed to Museum Street. He was repeatedly urged by his brother artists to join a studio where work was to be had, and where his services could be appreciated, but to all such advisers he had but one reply—"he was his own master, and meant to be so." After a time Woodington persuaded him to undertake, along with himself, a statue to Lord Eldon for a school in the New Road, and this was his first public work in London. Soon after this period Watson accidentally met with a Frenchman in a coffee-house, and their conversation turned on Art; and as the cup flowed their confidence increased, and the secret oozed out that they were both in low

circumstances, to remedy which state of things a happy idea possessed them, and, evidently anticipatory of the limited liability schemes of the present day, they formed a co-partnery for the manufacture of plaster casts. How long this Anglo-French alliance lasted is not known, but nothing good came out of it but the separation, any more than of the larger schemes for amalgamating the Englishman with his neighbour across the Channel, yclept the new member of the Latin race.

The state of Watson's finances in 1832 or 1833 became worse than critical, and as his friends refused to advance more cash, and the last penny he used to boast of was gone, the *res angusta domi* forced him to call at Chantrey's studio, where he exhibited his drawings and asked for work. The drawings were examined that evening by Mr. Cunningham, and next day Watson was engaged as a modeller by Chantrey. After a few days Chantrey and Cunningham compared notes on Watson's work, and readily agreed that it was by far the best modelling they had ever seen. Chantrey took an early opportunity of asking Watson to come to his department of the studio, as he wished to show him a monumental design for a Mrs. Digby, to be placed in the cathedral at Worcester. Watson, being asked to express his opinion, pointed out very calmly what appeared to him faulty, and, seeing pretty clearly that Chantrey had not caught the sentiment of the work, then offered suggestions more in

accordance with its *in memoriam* nature. Chantrey, seeing the full import of Watson's views, asked him to leave the work in which he was engaged and try his powers upon the Digby monument; and this he continued to do till the work was completed.

Whilst Watson was in Chantrey's studio, he received an offer from Westmacott and accepted it—thus agreeing to work for both the leading sculptors. It has been repeatedly said that he gave eight hours a day to each studio, but how he was able to accomplish sixteen hours a day is puzzling, and only explicable on the ground that this forced labour of double tides was imperative to stave off pressing pecuniary embarrassments. There is no doubt of his having done a great deal of work for both Chantrey and Westmacott, and stamped it with a character of his own; nor was his modelling and example lost upon his fellow-workmen, who rejoiced to see a man of original thought alongside them in the studios.

Watson was tolerably well paid, but not, as he conceived, to the extent of his services; hence arose a quarrel between him and Chantrey, that became a nine days' talk amongst the fraternity of artists. During Watson's engagement, Chantrey had nearly all the commissions worth having, and always grasped at more; and this, along with his strong saving knowledge, led him to exact a larger amount of labour from his assistants than was consistent with his money remuneration of them. Watson,

being fully sensible of his own powers, solicited an increase of wages, which Allan Cunningham considered just, and advised Chantrey to accede to; but Sir Francis, being in one of his penurious fits, would not advance a shilling beyond the original bond, and this refusal to comply with Watson's wishes led to a warm altercation between master and man, in the presence of Cunningham. Watson, whose tongue was poignant when the blood was up, told Sir Francis a bit of his mind, and finally accused him of meanness, and, when about to leave the studio, turned round to his friend Cunningham, and in an off-hand way said to him, "Nobody but a Scotchman would work for so parsimonious a fellow as Chantrey."

On two occasions it has been seen that Watson could use his Saxon vernacular, and hit hard, nor was he much behind others in invective on paper, whilst no one seemed able to rival him in the display of keen satire in the clay. During the excitement for "Reform" in 1832, Art played no small part in satirizing the opponents of the "People's Bill," and illustrations, however uncouth, if homely in character, sold by thousands. Watson, not as a politician—he was not prone to believe in a new regeneration of humanity from any legislative doings of the Collective Wisdom—but as an artist, joined in the prevailing sentiment, and modelled the Duke of Wellington and Sir R. Peel riding on a donkey with their backs to each other, in a most

droll way. The work was exceedingly clever in portraiture, and almost inimitable in its own line. Other "Old Sarum" worshippers came in for a sly hit, but the Wellington-*cum*-Peel was the *chef d'œuvre* of his Reform sketches, if not the cleverest thing of the kind marking the period; even now its characters are fresh in the memory of those who saw it thirty-four years ago. Watson did nothing with these sketches; they pleased his humour, filled up the hour, and then were shelved amongst the other trophies of his Hogarthian art.

After leaving Chantrey, he had the opportunity of working in a friend's studio in Robert Street, where he modelled the "Jolly Friars." Whilst engaged with the Friars, a brother of Behnes the sculptor came to the studio, and hesitated not to express his admiration of the work; and, returning home, praised Watson greatly. In a day or two, Behnes called himself, and was so pleased that he asked Watson to come and help him in a large statue meant for St. Paul's Cathedral. Watson consented, and his entry to Behnes's studio attracted a good deal of observation on account of his shy, downcast, and insignificant manner—so little in accordance with the spirit and character of the man. In less than a week, all eyes were fixed upon the work of the new comer, and the verdict was unanimously in favour of his being the man of the studio—not excepting the master of the establishment. Watson was at once engaged upon the "Dr. Babington"

statue Behnes, though excellent in busts, was no modeller of statues and, assuredly, no hand at colossal figures, so that the enlistment of Watson's services was a fortunate arrangement, and one of which he made great use. One who stood by—then a youth in Art, and now its leading master—was struck with the long tapering fingers of Watson and his peculiar mode of applying the clay; but he was more surprised, from day to day, with the rapid change effected in the model. The meagre form, a sort of "lean and slipper'd pantaloon" in Art, that Behnes had reared, was soon metamorphosed by Watson, who gave substance and character to the statue, till it became the embodiment of a well-made Englishman. The head of Babington was done by Behnes, and Watson did the rest of the work—a work that ranks amongst the few good ones in St. Paul's, and by far the best statue bearing the name* of Behnes.

Watson soon showed himself as the light of the studio, its directing mind; and the work that was issued from it, during his engagement, bore more or less of his impress. The master (Behnes) might have gone to Rome in search of more knowledge —as used to be quaintly related by the paid cicerones of Melrose

* In an able article on British sculpture, in *Fraser's Magazine* (Feb. 1845), the writer, in enumerating the statues of distinction in St. Paul's Cathedral, alludes most significantly, by the word *perhaps* in italics, to Behnes having one (Dr. Babington) among the group.

Abbey and Roslin Chapel concerning "the 'prentices' pillar" in these famous sanctuaries—and found on his return a journeyman pillar, with a Watsonian capital of striking superiority to his own. Behnes rested much on "his man's" counsel, but said nothing of increased pay; and Watson, not liking this, left, in the hope of advancing his interests elsewhere. Amongst other things, Watson made for Behnes a design of a girl and lizard—a semi-draped figure, which had many admirers. Nothing was done with it till Watson's death, when Behnes adopted the figure as his own—the only change being a part of the drapery—worked it in marble, sent it to the Great Exhibition of 1851, and got a medal for it! Fuseli's remark concerning Blake—that he was d——d good to steal from!—seems to have been understood by Behnes in relation to Watson. Poor Behnes schemed much and profited little. His end was sad—almost tragic—for one who had such great opportunities in his time.

Watson had no patience with officious counsellors, and still less with troublesome visitors; and his general instructions to the servant were "Not at home." This nettled some of his Cumbrian friends, one of whom remonstrated with him by letter. Whilst Watson was with Behnes, this Carlisle complainer found his way into the studio. Watson's quick eye detected his ancient monitor, spectacles and all, entering the door, and his decision was to avoid him: this he accomplished by a series of "artful dodges"—

now standing sideways to a statue, now crouching behind a pedestal—his little body moving from post to pillar with the agility of a cat. The dentist went round the room, using his eye-glass very freely; but nowhere could he discover "the lad of Hawksdale Hall." The amusement afforded the other occupants of the apartment by this fine by-play and bo-peep was never forgotten; nor the uses of a sculptor's studio as a hiding-place from tedious visitors. Irritated by what he considered a trick upon him, the old gentleman wrote Watson a sharp letter; to which the sculptor, nothing loth to follow suit in a quarrel with a troublesome friend, replied, most laconically, thus:—"Sir, I hate you."

After leaving Behnes, he had work with Baily, and higher wages, and seems to have been more content in Baily's studio than any other. There were many reasons for a pleasant feeling between the employer and the employed, as, for a time, Watson was entrusted with the sole charge of Baily's commissions, when the statue to Earl Grey was eagerly inquired for by the citizens of Newcastle-on-Tyne.

When Mr. Coade established the Terra Cotta Works in the Belvedere Road, Lambeth, he engaged Mr. George Nelson as sculptor, who, seeing the great works in hand, advised the co-operation of Watson. For two years Watson was the ruling mind of the establishment, and reaped large remuneration. He laboured

at friezes, and figures, and various works for the decoration of private mansions and public edifices. Some of his friezes for the Wyndham family were very beautiful, and his works were distributed over many parts of England—statues of Esculapius and Hygeia for a hall in Liverpool, and other groups for Dublin. The work passing through his hands was of a first-class character, and in doing it he had the pleasure of his own way, with princely pay, and no responsibility. The terra-cotta school was a good probationary one for "the City Frieze" and the "Royal Exchange" designs.

Some commissions of import must have come in his way at this period, or he would not have left his weekly guineas; probably the feeling again revived, with his prosperity, that he should do something more than terra-cotta work, if he meant to claim the character of sculptor, and to be worthy of the name and the greater distinction of being enrolled among the worthies of Art of old England.

"BE IT DEATH OR SLEEP—LYING IN LOVELINESS."

During the journeyman period of his life, Watson drew a female head, afterwards lithographed by J. C. Timbrill, which he designated, "Be it Death or Sleep—lying in loveliness." This drawing, one of the most touching of his works, the writer is

disposed to view as a study from nature, and that nature struck with a mortal disease. A female head, invested by a cap of thin texture—leaving the upper part of the head, the parting of the hair, and face uncovered—reclines on a pillow; and, whether the sketch is meant to convey a temporary or permanent sleep, the head itself is indescribably sweet in feeling. The sunken eyes betray an incipient wasting of the tissues of the body, and, perhaps, Watson's design was to depict the loveliness of form so frequently accompanying the victims of consumption. The perfection of repose, stillness, or inanimation, if you will, reigning throughout these exquisitely-chiselled features, recall the striking lines of Lord Byron on the shores of Greece:—

"So coldly sweet, so deadly fair.

. . . .

Hers is the loveliness in death,
That parts not quite with parting breath."

After the above had been written, the author learned that the drawing was taken from nature—Watson's own fair Helen in her last repose! A cast was taken of her features, and, as soon as a faithful drawing could be made from it, broken to pieces.

Helen had a son by Watson, who grew up to manhood, This son showed some taste for Art, but the sea offered a greater inducement, and became his settled calling in life.

CHAPTER VII.

JOLLY OR CRUTCHED FRIARS—THE NELSON MONUMENT—CHAUCER, SPENSER, AND JONSON—RAPHAEL—DANTE—BEATRICE—ELECTROTYPING.

THE JOLLY OR CRUTCHED FRIARS.

THE fun and humour which characterised Watson in his Hogarthian hours were nowhere more conspicuously set forth than in the group of the "Jolly," or "Crutched Friars," *—a work as

* The term "crutched" is applicable to "the brother" without a leg, and the term "jolly" may be safely hazarded as descriptive of the emotional condition of both brethren under artistic observation; but it is well that they should not be confounded with the order "Crutched" or "Crossed Friars," instituted A.D. 1169, at Bologna, by Gerard, Prior of St. Mary de Morello. In 1244 these friars appeared in England, requiring the opulent to provide them a house, telling that they were privileged by the Pope to be exempt from reproach by anybody, and that they had power to excommunicate any that were hardy enough to reprove them. Two citizens of London accommodated them with a house in the part still called "Crutched Friars." At first they carried in their hands an iron cross, which they afterwards changed for one of silver. They wore on their garment a cross of red cloth. Edmund Streatham was their last prior. He being caught by the visitors of Henry the Eighth one Friday at noon in bed with a Delilah,

broadly expressive of ecclesiastical life and predilections as it is inimitable in force of satire. As the sculptor was no bigot for Protestant ascendency, and cared little for religious, and less for political creeds, it may be inferred that he rather sought to delineate a type of the clerical *genus* met with in his Italian experiences, than ill-naturedly to cast reproach upon the assumed asceticism of coarse-clad and bare-legged monks. Whatever may have prompted Watson in the design, there it stands, a monument to his powers—as faithful in delineation as it is typical of character; animated with reality, bold, uncompromising, and, it may be, sarcastic, but withal a work in its own line almost unrivalled.

The group consists of two figures—broad-built members of "the orders grey," friars, monks, or what you will. The one-legged friar is evidently in his cups, and, while steadying himself on his left crutch, he has thrown his right arm, with its accompanying support, around his brother's neck; and to this the "hale fellow well met" also clings, so that a close, and apparently happy, fraternization of the brethren is established. The need

the foundation was dissolved, and the house granted by the king to Sir Thomas Wyatt. It is evident that the name *crutched* did not arise from the order using crutches, but wearing crosses. The Latin *crux*, and Chaucer's using *crouche* for cross, along with the heraldic relations of the cross, will enable the reader to comprehend the name and "order" more fully.

of a supporting agency is manifest from the bacchanalian bearing of these self-sacrificing brothers in the flesh. Both display a broad, sensual type of humanity — low foreheads, jolly noses, porcine cheeks, double chins, with short necks—apoplectic, very! Obesity and grossness prevail in the outer, whilst jollity possesses the inner man. The crutched friar, with waggish leer eyes askance his bearded friend chuckling in facetious banter, jibe, or jeer, and the two are perfect as studies of the clerical jubilant,

"O'er a' the ills o' life victorious;"

while the broad cowl, the sackcloth habit, and twisted rope around the persons—Luther named them, more broadly, "monks' bellies"—with keys and crucifix, leave nothing to be sought in the imagination; as everything, from the shaven crown to the sandalled feet, bespeaks not only the *genus* and the *species*, but the *variety*—Roman. Master "Cellarius"*—if the keys are to be taken as the insignia of the butler—has been treating his Capuchin friend to the best Falernian of his home department, and they have caroused a little too much. The bearded friar carries a small keg and mug artfully hidden under a broad-

* As no one is allowed to enter the service of the Romish Church with a visible physical blemish, the loss of a leg must have been an accident, and not improbably this infirmity induced his superiors to invest our crutched brother with the duty of cellarist.

brimmed hat and the folds of his habit, and in his cups he may be fancied singing a stave from the "Holy Friars"—

> "I'm clothed in sackcloth for my sin,
> With good sack wine I'm lined within.
> . . . . .
> What baron or squire, or knight of the shire,
> Lives half so well as a holy friar?"

There is life and soul in the group. A well contrasted individualism marks the brethren along with their broad generic cast, and strengthens the notion, generally entertained by Watson's friends, of the group being portraits obtained in or about Naples —the slow movements of the friars, and their frequent stoppages for fresh outbursts of hilarity, giving Watson a golden opportunity for studying them. In the outskirts of Rome and Naples may be verified Peter Pindar's words,—

> "Gangs of ogling, rosy, wanton friars."

The corpulence of the friars may appear to some exaggerated, but authority, both of the past and the present, is in favour of Watson's accuracy. Thus Erasmus spoke of the "heavy feeds" and "prolix compotations" of his brethren, the inhabitants of monasteries; and burly Dominicans and greasy Carmelites are still to be found on both sides of the Alps. Father Gavazzi is well known in England; and they who have

visited the monastery of the Capuchins in the Piazza Barberini, at Rome, could hardly fail to see a class of men vastly like Watson's group, unless their attention was too much fixed upon the quaintest and grossest cadaverous display in the world.

Partly owing to the fear of being considered non-academical, and still more to the want of the natural gift, the grotesque is not commonly pursued by English sculptors, yet this form of Art has done good in its time, and might do more if properly cultivated—avoiding the grotesque that merges into the coarse and indelicate, or that might wound the susceptibilities of a class not morbidly affected by sickly sentiment, or sicklier puritanism.

Sculpture, as it is exhibited here, holds up a mirror to nature, and that mirror reflects two jovial friars in their cups. Here is truthfulness enlivened by a dexterous satire, raciness of feeling, and life in every feature—sparkling with the Attic salt of Art;—in short, Watson's Friars constitute a group of very choice Italian.

THE NELSON MONUMENT.

Some time in 1838, a strong wish being expressed by the House of Commons, and echoed by the press, to erect a public monument to Horatio, Lord Nelson, the naval captain of the century, a Commission of Fine Arts, including the Woods and

Forests, was appointed to carry the wish of the country into effect; instead of which, they seem to have offended every artist in Britain, and only pleased a few parliamentary officials. The Nelson Monument was offered for public competition, and 150 designs were sent in early in 1839.* Public opinion did not like the mode of conducting the decision, nor any part of the procedure, so a second competition took place, and elicited 167 proposals. Watson appeared in both trials. His second effort showed a figure of Nelson, on a pedestal, rising from a flight of steps. On the plinths of the pedestal were figures of Britannia, Neptune, and Victory; and at the four angles, socles with lion, sphinx, &c. Nelson appeared in naval costume, and in the attitude of advancing against the enemy, with a drawn sword in his right arm, elevated above his head, as if prepared to strike. In his left arm, partly extended, was a globe, with a small figure of Victory standing upon it. Watson had no notion of a maimed figure in statuary to a man born without physical blemish, and in action so great and victorious. The design was massive, bold, consistent, and ranked fairly among the few applicable ones offered; but, if its merits had been greater, and some of his rivals still better, the result would have been the same. The compe-

* The writer has to trust to his memory for the dates in this chapter: luckily these are of less moment as far as a coherent narrative of Watson's life is concerned.

tition was a sham throughout; favouritism ruled Sir Robert Peel, and he ruled the Commission. Instead of a portrait statue, with features distinctly visible, and for posterity to read and scan, a Corinthian pillar was erected, with the hero of "Britain's glory" perched on high, as if the mast-head, and not the quarter-deck, had been the summit of Nelson's ambition. In justification of the pillar, it was argued (with the view of appeasing the popular objections made against its adoption) that the column was borrowed from the Temple of Mars Ultor, at Rome, forgetting, apparently, that the column of a cella could hardly be viewed as analogous in application to an open air monolithic erection, bearing on its summit a portrait statue.

The designs were exhibited to the public, as if to hide all appearances of partiality for the masonic erection; but, as the "Art Journal" remarked at the time, "this public exhibition was a mere imposition, a show of a desire that existed not." Whilst admitting that of the 167 competitors* few had shown any high or marked excellence in art, and none apparently had risen to the dignity of a subject, national in its significance, as well as commemorative of England's Nelson, nothing could well

* Think of the gratuitous labour of 167 artists, the time and money expended without remuneration or requital of any kind! Sacrifices are due to patriotism, it is true; but those who hold the purse of the nation should act with a nation's spirit, and not practise a sham competition.

justify the decision, and few men of taste could sanction the design or treatment of the memorial. The "Nelson Column," like the "Wellington Marble Arch," is an enigma to foreigners, and both stand as opprobria to our art judgment. The aged sailor's remark on seeing the completed erection in Trafalgar Square, "that his old captain (Nelson) was now at the mast-head, where he never expected to see him," was the best comment on the work, and not less expressive of the general sentiment of the country at large.

THE "POETS"—GEOFFREY CHAUCER, EDMUND SPENSER, AND BEN JONSON.

As it was essential to a man of Watson's restless fibre to be occupied in some fashion or another, if no commissions were on hand, and delighting as he did in works of a classical derivation, he turned to the Iliad for Art inspiration. Among the Greeks, infant Art borrowed materials for its nutrition from the pages of Homer, Anacreon, and Sappho; and such is the force of true poesy that the Bard of Cos inspires the Celt and the Saxon of to-day much as he did the Hellenes upwards of two thousand years ago. Watson made numerous designs with the Homeric poesy as a basis, and, as the subjects were so much after his own heart, he would, had circumstances favoured his

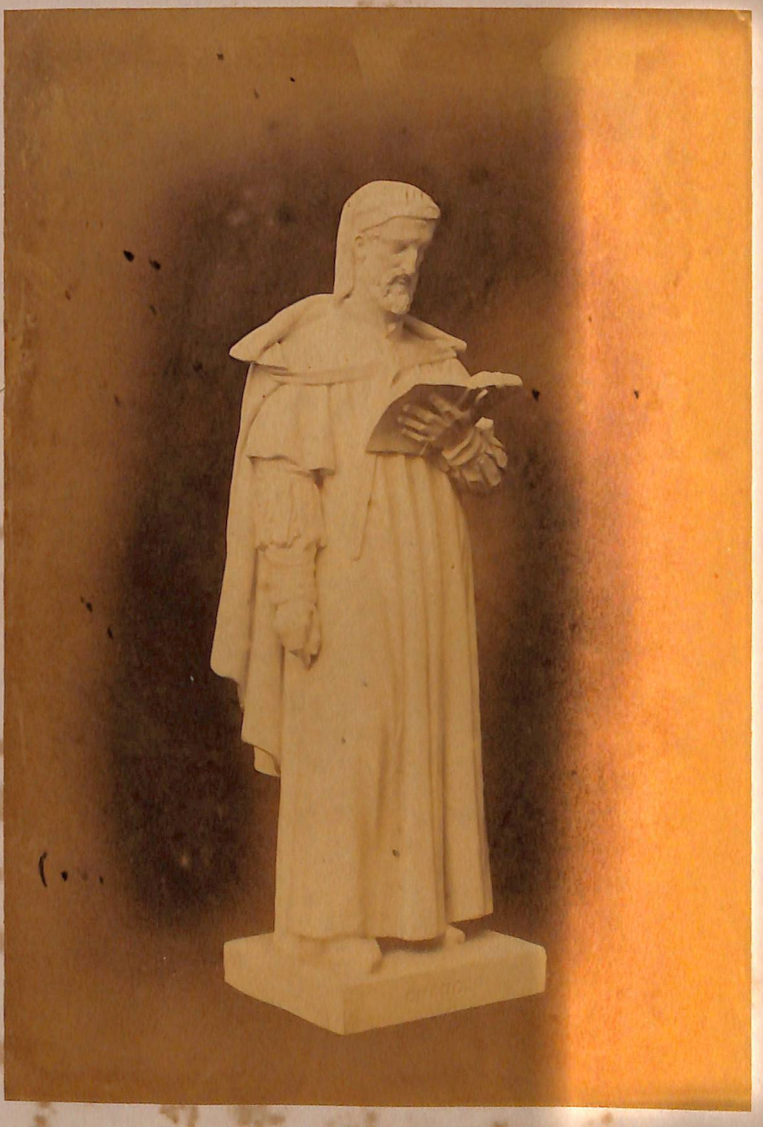
carrying them out to their true end in the marble, rendered them poetical, and effective as examples of classical study. It was said of these designs, that they betrayed Watson into a close imitation of Flaxman, and that he was cognisant of the tendency. Probably so, and, along with the fact that there was no encouragement, and little or no feeling, in the metropolis for the pure classic, may account for his abandoning the Iliad, and seeking subjects for his pencil in the Canterbury Tales and the Faërie Queene. Having breathed of the Romantic and Classical, and with a love and appreciation of both the great schools in history, he turned his attention to the English and Mediæval.

With the end of gratifying his *penchant* for our early national poetry, and as heading a series of illustrations to the same end, he modelled statuettes (2 ft. 2 in. high) of Chaucer and Spenser. These works were well conceived, and historically seemed so desirable, that great regret was felt by all who saw them that Watson did not continue the series (as originally intended), till he had furnished, as apt ornaments for the libraries of England, the visage, bearings, and costume of the men whose poesy graced the bibliothecal shelves of every man of taste in the country. The statuettes he got done necessarily partook somewhat of the ideal, but the ideal of genius always pleases, whether the results of its art be rigidly correct or not as to portraiture:

and Watson's "Poets" undoubtedly pleased. The notion entertained by Watson was a healthy and patriotic one—to revive the worthies in English poesy, by making their portraits popular and their manner intelligible to the community at large—thus placing them above the bibliothecal horizon, and the limited domain of the literary circle.

If Italy had its Dante and Petrarch, England had its (almost contemporary) celebrity and fellow-worker in poesy—Geoffrey Chaucer: and these three constituted the triumvirate of poets of the Middle Ages. The Italians have their poets commemorated in the hearts of the people, as well as in monumental records; not so with the English, who could hardly infuse as much spirit into the tercentenary of Shakespeare as would mark the rejoicings at the birth of a petty German prince.

To embody the spiritual character of Chaucer in statuary could not be looked upon as an easy task, even if the present age had been more closely approximative to that of the poet's, as the costume of the period (14th century), and that of a person filling various offices in the State, could only be generally estimated. However guided, whether by portraits of Chaucer or description, Watson designed a model no less noble than impressive. It shows the stamp of originality, and, in sobriety of costume, approaches the monastic mediævalism. The bearing of our first great English bard is well rendered—the broad



head, rather thin features, the eyes absorbed by the open page, the left hand sustaining the book, the right holding a style, are in good keeping with the scholarly pursuits of the poet. The hands are particularly fine, as models of a part of the human mechanism, always as difficult to represent as the mental character is to be physiognomically traced—the brain and the hand being typical of man's pre-eminence, the one the interpreter of nature's laws, the other the moulder of nature's materials.

There is a force and grandeur in Watson's Chaucer—in his contemplative thoughtfulness and attitude—which bespeak true feeling and character. Possibly exception may be taken by those who have not inquired into the history of the times, and think only of the Canterbury Tales, to the severe costume of Chaucer—a man who enjoyed pension and place, if not a primitive laureateship in name, at least a refresher for the post in the allowance of a daily pitcher of wine. The ecclesiastical robing of a man who never felt kindly towards the Church seems inconsistent, but his portraits in the British Museum and in Gower's work show this dress, along with a cross and beads. Mr. Calder Marshall, guided by historical aid, has produced these emblems, and the more precise characteristics of the custom-house officer, in his excellent statue of Chaucer in the Crystal Palace at Sydenham. The slashings* on the arms

* According to the sumptuary laws of the period, men were not allowed

23533

indicate a courtly position, or moneyed possessions. In Watson's Chaucer you have the abstracted student conning over the historical legends, and, in the costume, a growing deviation, however slight, from the ecclesiastical, just as the language of the time was being changed from its hybrid form to the true vernacular of England.

Watson sought larger freedom in his statuette of Edmund Spenser. The robed severity of Chaucer is abandoned for the closely-fitting dress of a later, and probably much livelier, era; there is more chivalry and less scholarship displayed in the author of the Faërie Queene—more of the "Amoretti" than the studies of Pembroke Hall in his appearance. A showy rather than an austere costume indicates Spenser to be a man of the world, and fit companion for the noble Raleigh and the *belles* of the Elizabethan period. Character, however, has not been overlooked in the elegant exterior, and, along with the scholarly adjunct of a book resting on the knee, there is depicted a mind within to rival the rich trappings without.

The third of the group was Ben Jonson, whose attitude would imply force of character and a challenging tone, in the right arm being pressed against his side, and shoulders well

to wear "gown or garment cut or slashed into pieces, in the form of letters, rose leaves, and posies of various kinds, or any such like devices," under a penalty.

thrown back. A mask is placed at his feet, in accordance with the period of "rare Ben's" best days.

How many more of the proposed series were done by Watson is not known, but in his letters he mentions Beaumont and Fletcher, with some *et ceteras*. He had one of Shakespeare, as he offered a copy to a friend. Whether he felt dissatisfied with his Shakespearian statuette, or it was broken, as Mr. Nelson believes, no clue is now to be had to a figure which, if at all worthy of Watson, would have been fit companion for Chaucer and Spenser. In all these historical statuettes, it is well known that Watson laboured hard to get the true costume of the period—wishing to establish this along with the portraiture. His "Poets" are well individualized, and appear as men with a mind and a vocation. In 1842 they lost favour with Watson, if, indeed, they ever possessed much of his art allegiance; and in one of his peevish humours he wrote to an intimate friend, "The figures ('Poets') are common, neat, and made for sale. They are sad rubbish as works of art, but have in them what folks understand."

Whilst engaged with the "Poets," Watson made lots of drawings of costume, from the time of the Edwards and the Henrys of England down to the last century, as if preparing to go more extensively into historical art. Men of all ranks got a place in his portfolio and in his illustrations of William the

Third's time, you see the fun of the artist in imitating the visage of the Dutch boor clothed in an English garb, so that he intended a larger series than the poets, and would seem to have aimed at the development of an illustrated Cromwellian period. All his drawings of drapery were exceedingly fine—possessing special attributes of their own; and, had they been collected and published in lithographic or other forms, would have been most important aids to students of sculptorial art.

RAPHAEL, DANTE, AND BEATRICE.

Though possibly not in order as to time, it may be well to notice here two medallions in plaster of Paris of Dante and Raphael; almost miniature in size, most exquisite in lines, beautifully executed, and full of grace and character. These medallions were finished by the tool: hence their extreme sharpness and delicacy. The Dante is, perhaps, the most precious of the two.

His Dante and Beatrice were of the same character as the preceding, as highly finished, and as rich in true art; and both sets of medallions have received the highest praise from the ablest metropolitan critics. Watson designed these works for his kind friend Mr. Bellenden Ker, whose good taste on matters of art he so much appreciated and valued.

HEBE AND IRIS.

Lord Lansdowne commissioned Watson to execute two figures for his gates at Bowood, and Hebe and Iris were the result. At the request of his lordship, the sketches were sent to the Royal Academy Exhibition. As an illustration of his powers, it may be told that one Saturday evening he desired his assistant to prepare the clay for Hebe, and on Monday morning the figure was found completed. Watson, in reference to the surprise expressed by his assistant, said that he had been in the humour for work, and done Hebe without leaving his studio—the better the day, the better the deed!

ELECTROTYPING.

In 1840–1 Watson took to electrotyping, and became highly enthusiastic in its application to his own art. He wrote, "I have amused myself for two or three months with the electrotype, and succeeded in casting two figures entirely round, also some bas-reliefs." His friends speak in high terms of these electrotyped works, and Baily the sculptor wrote to Watson, "I wish I could have shown your beautiful specimens of electrotype to my friends" —a large party assembled at his house. "They are the most

beautiful I ever saw. Nothing in my opinion could surpass the head of George the Fourth, and the others were equally beautiful, as they show the capability of applying the electrotype to large figures in the round, which will be fac-similes of the models. . . . The little model of the Battle of Marengo is most beautiful." Watson was pleased with these works, some of which he bequeathed to his friend Sir Charles Eastlake, the President of the Royal Academy.

CHAPTER VIII.

PORTRAITURE OF WATSON.

CHRIST BLESSING CHILDREN—IN CHRISTO PAUPERIBUS—THE OUTCASTS.

AS Watson is emerging from the studios, and about to make a fresh start with fresh hopes, if not with fresh life, it may be well to glance at his physical and mental portraiture on and after the completion of his thirty-fifth year.

Watson presented the spare figure of a man considerably below the medium height, a conspicuous head, thinly covered with sandy-coloured hair, a pale face, eyes penetrating, but far from prominent, a pinched aquiline nose, and well proportioned mouth and chin. As age advanced, there was a worn-out look about him,—the marked aspect of a man suffering from bodily disease; the hair had fallen off considerably from the head, and a shining baldness made that head still more striking. He had long sinewy arms with slight tapering fingers—the artistic form,

according to D'Arpentigny,* and recognisable by the dullest observers. His temperament was highly nervous. Bereft of his tailoring, his slender frame so contrasted with his massive head as anatomically to suggest an adult form, the analogue of the embryonic; his body appeared but a machine, active and pliable in all verity to carry out the ideas emanating from the nervous centres. His profile recalled a portrait of Fra Bartolommeo, and, by many of his contemporaries, Watson was considered to have a Flaxman's head as he had a Flaxman's gifts, and probably these gifts in a higher degree than any man of his own times. The phrenologist would have rejoiced in the examination of Watson's head, and pointed to "order" and "form," the large "ideality," and broad "comparison," as showing the true artistic type; and the slightly diminutive "veneration," but by no means diminutive "combativeness," or of the other animal feelings, as indicative of well-known traits in his character, and not less corroborative of the Gall and Spurzheim theory.

From this outline of portraiture, it may be inferred that in temperament, cranial development, and sinewy frame, nature had furnished Watson with powers well calculated to raise him above

* M. D'Arpentigny (*La Science du Main*) traced a connexion between mental organization and the form of the hand. He began by observing two great types of character in the smooth-fingered impressionable artists, and the knotty-fingered mathematicians, and he spent thirty years in the elaboration of the system.

the common level of humanity; and if all was not verified that might have been, much is to be attributed to his health, to his unlucky relations, and the non-recognition of his powers during the first ten years of his London life, and still more to the short span of that life after the recognition of its worth.

Some features in Watson's character were but the expression of his temperament or organization, and for which a man having to buffet with the world could hardly be held responsible. He was impulsive in action, and morbidly sensitive in feeling, easily offended and not so easily soothed, fearless of consequences when the blood was up, yet in a happier mood full of generous sentiments. Naturally kind-hearted, he liked to be helping others, and this he did with no sparing hand. To his assistants and workfolk he rendered many good services; and, now that he has been gone upwards of nineteen years, there are some living who cannot speak of him without a display of feeling as fresh as if his death had been yesterday. He gained the regard of his compeers by his ability and originality, but he won the hearts of those around him by his thorough kindness.

Wanting in equanimity, to-day he was the victim of doubts, depression, and despondency, to-morrow he rose with hopes and lofty aspirations; and so the wheel went round—its movements in no small degree influenced by dyspepsia and impaired health. He could pen the keenest satire on one page, whilst kindly feeling

marked the next—an antithesis in himself of hard words and hate with generosity and good feeling. When pleasantly encouraged in his work, he was at home with everybody; but if he had to encounter currents of stupidity and ignorance, then woe betide the offending mortals who came between the wind and his nobility. He could be cynical, and at times aggressive, with a "troublesome friend," and no doubt his tongue and pen got him into difficulties that a wiser policy would have avoided. It is unnecessary to inquire into the reason why artists are designated (rightly or wrongly) a *genus irritabile* of mortals; but Watson was not devoid of the Thorvaldsen character in that respect, and had evidently not learned to appreciate the words of Edmund Burke: "We must live at peace with our species, if not for their sakes, yet very much for our own."

Though his wants were trifling, his diet simple, and his dress plain, he had but few of the home comforts of respectable English life. Afraid of acknowledging his conjugal position, he had not the full benefit of Helen's devotion, nor was her influence equal to the situation of softening asperities or stimulating ambition. He saw but little of society, where he would have shone most creditably, and, though calculated to fascinate the sex, saw nothing of the refined intercourse of women; hence he enjoyed few of the amenities of life, and little of the *solatium domi*. Art and a kind of intellectual closeting absorbed him almost entirely;

and incessant anxiety about his profession, without an attendant success, tended greatly to sour him. Good society, a judicious friend, or a woman of superior claims by his side, would have saved him from the petty annoyances as well as the greater errors surrounding his early career, and given him a different impetus in the world's race. His time and thoughts should have been kept free for the great object and aim of his life—Art.

Like many of his county (Cumberland) folk, he had a large share of independence in his nature, and exercised the feeling with as much tenacity in the metropolis as if he had been ever stationary by the banks of the Cauda—where bucolic obstinacy is as common as roadside thistles—and seen nothing of the world that tempers and modifies the prejudices of rural life. The family inheritance—pride, or haughtiness if you will—had its advantages in keeping Watson above the petty and mean in Art—the back-stair and sinister workings for personal aggrandizement or profit. If he showed undue loftiness at times, he also showed works and large accomplishment in its support.

Watson was free from the sordid and selfish in early life, and possessed of all the generosity of inexperienced age.

> "All, when life is new,
> Commence with feelings warm and prospects high;
> But time strips our illusions of their hue."

So did time affect Watson. When patrons did not show, and the

substance of his inheritance had been spent in laying a basis for future fame, he had to lower his estimate of art encouragement, and to look upon the imperative necessities of life. In 1832 pecuniary obligations became pressing, and one of the greatest trials he ever experienced was having his goods and chattels distrained for rent, and the colossal figure which had cost him months of work, if not years of thought, treated as a piece of clay, it being knocked to pieces and sold as earth! This was Law *versus* Art with a terrible vengeance and Vandalism. *Five pounds'* worth of clay got out of a Hercules model which, if completed, might have realized a large sum, if not larger fame to the sculptor, and enabled him to satisfy all demands tenfold. A grand ideal work of costly labour was cast to the ground as potter's clay to appease the wrathfulness of an impatient creditor, whose name should be made known as the direst iconoclast, and the very Shylock of his tribe or calling. For some months, being low in finance, and perhaps lower in feeling, he mingled with the artisan class, or sorted with the waifs and strays of London life, little better in household possession than the Jews at Rome in Domitian's reign, so aptly described by Juvenal—

". . . quorum cophinus fœnumque supellex."

But as long as he had a roof over his head, Art found a corner in the domicile. It was this treasuring up of a model—the man

who carried "his idols" when he had nothing besides—that enabled anxious friends to discover him after weeks of seclusion from the world. When found he shrank from observation, and wished to treat his visitors as intrusive. After a time, however, the friendly tone, the voice that used to cheer with the recall of other and brighter days, dispelled the mists of a morbid imagination; and Watson rose, shook off his growl, and, forgetting both his *locus in quo* and his own personality, rushed to the door supported by sympathising friends. After days of self-immuring and hopeless reflections over the ills of fortune, the step beyond the threshold and seeing the life and lights of the streets were incitement sufficient, along with the muscular action of his body, to refresh his burthened soul, and to cleanse it of much weighty and perilous stuff.

Out of countenance with the world, and living in an owl's light, was a sad abasement of the man Watson, who must have brooded over the winter of his discontent as the dark clouds lowered upon his art prospects, and as often descanted on his own deformity of purpose in not being able to fancy a brighter colouring beneath the shadows of life. This inertia to meet the world and the duties devolving upon him being overcome—more the trodden-down feeling of sheer neglect than apathy for labour—his step was as strong as ever in the opposite direction, showing energy and indomitable will.

Watson had a large imaginative faculty, resembling the poet's in its intensity and grasp, and this faculty was constantly being exercised upon art. It was the possession of this power, and the non-realization of the wishes it pointed to, as well as the non-appreciation of his works by others, which created a nervous impatience, and so embittered his feelings. To men of his high idealistic stamp the world appears dull and prosy enough; and how few tempers made of fine steel, such as Watson's, can withstand the stupidities of the men of bronze or heavier metal! Watson laboured to indoctrinate others with his art sentiments, and to make his countrymen alive to the enjoyment of higher feelings than the material interests of wealth; but there was little or no response, and his mind became distempered beyond its natural bias of irritability. To those born in the purple of repose, and whose feelings rest more on the organic functions than the exercise of the cerebral powers, such men as Watson appear as mysterious beings—melancholic or perverse—the world not being much alive to the discrimination arising from psychological study, and at no time highly gifted with charity of feeling. Nor, with all the experience derived from the past in history, is there much readiness on the part of society to admit that the eccentricities of one age may become the wisdom of the next.

CHRIST BLESSING LITTLE CHILDREN.

The Hon. Miss Fox, having erected a school near Holland House, wished some decorative work consistent with the character and objects of the building to embellish the doorway. Watson was applied to, and he executed a work in terra-cotta, "Christ blessing Little Children." Taking the text of St. Matthew upon which so many artists have founded their works illustrative of the Saviour's "Suffer little children," &c. he succeeded in grouping the children around the Christ, along with the disciple and mother, in a natural and pleasing way. The children are represented of various ages, and Watson happily blended the infantile simplicity of the younger ones with the recognition of the Saviour and more submissive feeling characterising the higher in age, thus illustrating the devotional spirit rising in accordance with the growing intelligence and maturity of the group. The work was happily conceived; the benign Christ, in the mercy and tenderness of His love blessing the children, all of whom seem sensible of this mark of affection, whilst the mother stands by, showing the inward rejoicing of delight and gratitude. There is a natural feeling in the group, in the sweet countenances and healthy forms, and in the cheerful yet meek looks directed to the Saviour.

This *alto-rilievo* gave great pleasure to Miss Fox and her many friends, and amongst the latter Mr. Rogers, the poet, who approved so highly of it, that he begged the favour of Miss Fox introducing him to the "unknown artist." The letter written to Watson by his noble lady patron, asking him to Holland House to meet Mr. Rogers, was most kind and complimentary in every way. Watson was charmed with this venerable and delightful person, and when she was seized with paralysis, he wrote with great feeling to his sister that he was about to lose one of his best friends—"a noble lady, whom he loved so much." This group gained for him the good will and high esteem of Mr. Rogers, than whom no one stood higher in London for his love, knowledge, and patronage of the Fine Arts.

IN CHRISTO PAUPERIBUS.

Though Watson made no demonstration of church-going, he was not devoid of religious feeling. Probably he felt as many have done (and still do), the impossibility of subscribing to the ideal and dogmatic standards, or of listening to the sermonizing of Scribes and the denunciation of Pharisees, and so withdrew from the gatherings of the "self-elect." He entered into the religious sentiment of Art like a man imbued with a Christian

belief, differing greatly from the sceptical Thorvaldsen, whose faith in things above was on a par with the faith shown his mistresses below. Watson accomplished little of a Biblical character in sculpture, but this might be more owing to English fashion preferring the sensuous and the homely to the devotional emblems, than any inherent objection on the part of the artist himself to works of a sacred nature.

In some of his pen-and-ink sketches Watson showed a fine feeling for religious art; thus, in his "In Christo Pauperibus," representing Religion in its happiest relations of love and charity, dispensing the waters of life, there are twenty-five figures in the group, all distinct in expression, and consonant in character—beautifully touching and devotional—which the writer would gladly have given amongst the illustrations of Watson's facile and happy art.

Another subject which Watson treated with all the zeal and fervour of a man seeking through life liberty of action for his own work, as well as for human thought, and all its social and religious privileges, might be entitled, "The Angel of Liberty in a Prison." A figure with extended wings is shown in an apartment with unfolded doors, in the midst of chained and manacled victims, who recline in every position on the floor, and whose physiognomies exhibit every phase of the strong emotional in character.

THE OUTCASTS, OR MOTHER AND CHILDREN IN A STORM.

Watson made a sketch in clay of a mother and her three children, and the group he designated—"The Outcasts, or Mother and Children in a Storm." As a specimen of modelling on the diminutive scale—the main figure not exceeding eight inches in height—it could hardly be surpassed either in character or effect. Drawn, it may be supposed, from the streets of London—for where could the types be so readily met with?—this group shows a mother and family half-naked and all-forlorn, apparently pinched with hunger, and struggling against the storm,—outcasts in all verity. The mother, with her body slightly bent forwards, is trying to shelter her family against nature's blasts, and to appease their craving cry for nature's food and rest. In her left arm she carries a naked infant closely folded against her neck and bosom. A second child, able to walk, is by her side, partly sheltered by her and the infant form above, and holding by the remnant of a garment that hides the parent's nakedness. The expression of this child is timid and fearful, while it seems to cling closer and closer to the mother. The oldest of the three, in averting her body from the storm, stands in front, with her head resting against her mother's breast, and

with a fixed and tenacious embrace of her mother's person. In the girl's face there is the expression of suffering and the painful realization of the hopeless.*

In the baby there is seen the mere physical nature, infantile and inarticulate, and in the second child an instinctive dread, but in the oldest girl there is the bodily suffering, and something more, that gives to her features a sad imploring expression. From the youngest upwards the feeling conveyed by the sculptor is typical of age in the physical, instinctive, and emotional, till at length it culminates in the mental anguish of the mother, who has to bear the same privations as her flock, with the more terrible burden of having her maternal instincts tried, thwarted, and bitterly wounded. The sculptor may have had King Lear's words in view:—

> "Poor naked wretches, whosoe'er you are,
> That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
> How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
> Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you
> From seasons such as these?"

The work affords a touching picture of life in the lowest strata of humanity—whether abased by personal culpability or

* Owing to the shadows of the face, the photograph, though admirably done by Mr. Carrick, does not convey the feeling described in the text. Accidentally a portion of the leg was taken off along with some of the base of the group.

the result of the ills of fortune; it is not less forcible in tone than sympathetic in appeal with all the naturalism of art. The rough clay has become so ductile in the hands of a master, that the words of Shakespeare, graphic as they are, become merged in forms as strong in delineation and facile of comprehension as the poesy itself, and in every way suggestive of the highest tenderness and pathos. This sketch stamped the sculptor as a man of mark and interpreter of nature. Even Watson himself was pleased with the work, and gave it a place in the centre of his chimney-piece, and this was great praise, seeing that the work had no rival there in its Penates' glory. If, as is believed by one of his friends, Watson expressed himself well satisfied with the group, it had attained the highest distinction of any work that ever came from his hands; and his doing a bas-relief pretty similar in character to the figures in the round implied a wish to make more of the "Outcasts" than a mere sketch.

The fertility of Watson's mind made him careless of his works. He would make a sketch with all the zeal and earnestness which a fresh subject infused into his efforts, but, if his thoughts got away in another direction more consonant with his humour, it might not be cared for beyond the hour of its completion. This could be said of many capital productions of his, not merely of those with a slight flaw in them, which as a matter of course soon came to grief. It was only works bearing the

Watsonian standard of merit which rose to the proud position of the "Outcasts."

Watson's charity was often touched by the sight of the poverty-stricken, and the "Outcasts" were probably determined upon when his heart was wrung by their exhibition in the flesh, for there is no reason to believe that his design was aided by "life models;" such was the tenacity of his memory when fairly impressed that he would have no difficulty in copying the living emblems into clay. There is no polish, and no finish in the work, yet of itself is as finished a sketch of human nature "out in the cold" as English art can furnish. Nothing is wanting but "the breath of life" to make the creations of the artist partakers of our deepest sympathy—the mother's trying solicitude, if not despair, the infantile grasp, the timid looks and instinctive dread, the girl quailed by the storm casting herself upon the maternal bosom, and all keenly commiserable.

The "Outcasts" should be viewed alongside the "Christ blessing Little Children" described in a previous page, so that the "poor naked wretches" with "houseless heads and unfed sides," in whose faces misery and degradation are depicted as the type and realization of life, might be contrasted with the children around the Saviour, clothed, plump in form, and, above all, enjoying the preciousness of safety, love, and affection.

Watson's work recalls the touching sentiments of the "Song

of the Shirt." If Hood could have had the pencil of Watson to illustrate his imperishable words, the poet and the sculptor in conjunction would have made the plastic forms and language of the joys and sorrows of humanity the most graphic and telling histories of our social life;—studies to thrill the feelings and melt the hearts of Englishmen.

The rude clay formation constitutes the great charm of the work, and one so thoroughly illustrative of what is termed "a diamond in the rough," a gem of modern art, rivalling the unfinished antique.

CHAPTER IX.

SARPEDON — VICTORIA ROOMS, BRISTOL — LIVERPOOL MEMORIAL — MRS. BROUGHAM—SIR F. BUXTON.

SARPEDON of Crete, who ruled over Lycia, and came to the defence of Troy, is one of the most glorious of the Homeric heroes—the poet having invested him with powers and attributes worthy of his divine lineage. Watson would appear to have imbibed the spirit of the great bard, and to have caught the true Hellenic feeling when he modelled his bas-relief of "Sleep and Death bearing off the body of Sarpedon." An elevated taste, as well as love of art, and an intimate acquaintance with the subject—the more intimate if obtained from the original Iliad—are essential adjuncts to comprehend the fine sentiment, almost Homeric itself, set forth by the sculptor, in a work wherein he seeks to illustrate the advice given Jove by the goddess with the radiant eyes:—

> "Give the bold chief a glorious fate in fight,
> And, when th' ascending soul has wing'd her flight,
> Let Death and Sleep convey, by thy command,
> The breathless body to his native land."

The Spartans looked upon Sleep and Death as two brothers—"ὕπνῳ καὶ θανάτῳ διδυμάοσιν," and sculptured them accordingly. It was the same spirit that guided Homer in his description of the mode in which Sarpedon's body should be conveyed to its last resting-place.

Watson's group is classical in the highest degree, and consists of three figures. A Destiny—aptly indicative of the stern, the strong, and the swift—bears the body of the hero, and, as if unconscious of the mortal burthen, penetrates space with a motion not aided by wings, but equally demonstrative, whether it be viewed as instinctive, or volitional, or by Jove's high behest. The left arm of the Destiny is extended forward, as the upraised brows and eyes of more than mortal ken are directed to the goal beyond. His hand grasps the emblematic asp, and twined in his hair is the same significant and repulsive token. Sleep, a more fragile form, compassionate and placid, sustains the head, and with gentle tenderness enfolds the form of the departed —her position and clothing simulating a description of Æschylus, translated as—

> "Her form in flowing drapery wound,
> Her head declining,"

and altogether affectingly eloquent. Sarpedon occupies the centre, with head and shoulders slightly raised, but with arm dependent

and in the attitude natural to death. The eyes are closed, but in his countenance are the noble repose and grandeur of the heroic spirit. The muscular contour of the warrior is associated with all the perfection of human beauty. Throughout the group the anatomy is true to nature, and, as in the dependent and semi-curved hand, bearing a physiological suggestiveness rarely met with in art. Sarpedon enshrines the spiritual idea of death, and, though the soul has winged her flight, the body retains the true impersonation of the breathless only—

> "Before decay's effacing fingers
> Have swept the lines where beauty lingers,
> And mark'd the mild angelic air,
> The rapture of repose that's there."

If Watson had done nothing more than show how Death could be typified by a simple tranquillity rather than by the skeleton, and other hideous emblems—the remnants of a barbaric age—he would have been entitled to high praise for his appropriate treatment of the subject. Death is humiliating enough, under whatever circumstances it is presented to the mind; but Art, instead of exercising a refining influence, as it ought to do, is misdirected and debased by such productions as Wyatt's statue of Nelson before the Exchange of Liverpool, and other works of the same incongruous class. Bones denuded of their muscular

coverings are inert masses, the mere framework and leverage upon which volition acts through nerve and sinew; therefore to depict a skeleton in action, grasping and pointing to its victim, cannot be held tenable on any theory of art, mythological or modern, and is, to say the least, a style of illustration offensive in form, and unsuited to the sculpturesque.

The English taste stands in need of culture by academies when the provincial artist can content his patrons with "skulls and cross-bones," or fat Cupids with goose-shaped wings as angelic accessories to the grisly horrors of his *memento mori;* or when, in less heinous outlines, but not less questionable regard for historical correctness, he adopts "the scythe and hour-glass"—

> "On some frail memorial . . . . . .
> With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture deck'd"—

the attributes of old *Chronos* or Time, a different personage altogether from "Old Mortality"—Death. The Egyptians—Pagan, Trinitarian, or Polytheistic as they might be—had more dignified notions of death 5,000 years ago than some of the eighteenth-century Christianized British sculptors, as is well seen on comparing the delineation of the "Goddess of the Western Shores" in the Tombs of the Kings at Thebes, with the monument to Miss Nightingale by Roubilliac, in Westminster Abbey.*

* Some of our English designs, if not so extreme in character, are almost in as bad taste as Orcagna's work on the walls of the Church of Campo

How different also is the Grecian treatment of death compared with the fierce and terrible character that had its origin in the Scandinavian superstitions, and which seems to have been continued through our Teutonic ancestors along with "the mysteries" of the darkest mediævalism.

It is much to be regretted that Watson did not carve the Sarpedon in marble as one of the most classical and noble of his productions, so that—

> "The kindled marble's bust may wear
> More poesy upon its speaking brow,
> Than aught less than the Homeric page may bear."

He had an engraving of the work executed by Mr. A. R. Freebairn's anaglyptic process—one peculiarly adapted to the Sarpedon—

Santo at Pisa, where the artist represents in the Last Judgment—Hell, three kings and their mistresses, as being met by St. Macarius, who treats the last-named *traviata* to a sight of their coffined future "the three living and the three dead." The *memento mori* of the uncivilized tribes by the Lake Nyassa show a higher sentiment than some modern nations, for there the graves are distinguished by the implements and utensils which their occupants had used in their different employments during life, but these characteristics are all broken. Livingstone thus describes the graves:—"A piece of fishing net, or a broken paddle, told that a fisherman slept beneath. The graves of women were marked by the wooden mortar and heavy pestle used in pounding corn, or the basket in which the meal is sifted, and all had placed over them fractured calabashes and pots, signifying that the need of daily food was at an end for ever." How superior in feeling is all this to what is generally seen in the consecrated graveyards of Christianized England!

and dedicated it to his "early friend and patron, G. G. Mounsey, Esquire," of Carlisle, but he would neither publish nor sell copies of the engraving. Watson, having heard (March, 1847) that the Cumberland Infirmary at Carlisle was not overflowing in its coffers, sent twenty-one impressions of his Sarpedon—each copy to be sold for a guinea, or a twenty guineas' contribution to the funds. The letter conveying his wishes to the writer, as physician to the institution—a letter as kind in sentiment as the gift was handsome,—contained *inter alia:* "He who has anything to give is not required to say much. Were I either a Baring or a Rothschild, all my money should go towards the endowment and building of a great hospital." Watson did not wish to trumpet his gift to the world, as is too much the practice with some of the Cumbrian money-ocracy, and therefore added a postscript: "No one knows a word save you. This work by me is private: not one impression can be bought except in the manner now told you. It is not published, neither will I sell impressions for gain—only for charity." The letter would have been worthy of quoting *in extenso* had not personal compliment to the physician prevailed.

Every man of taste and judgment has praised the Sarpedon, so that the writer has little to add to the general verdict. As the editors of the *Art Journal's* "Illustrated Catalogue" in 1851 remarked,—"Such a subject as the Sarpedon would have entered

the mind of no ordinarily endowed artist, and to treat it in the severe, graceful, and touching manner in which Mr. Watson has represented it, is what we should have looked for only from the genius of Flaxman. . . . With the exception of some of Flaxman's noble designs, we know not that we have ever seen from an English sculptor any work more elegantly rendered than this." Watson seems to have rivalled his master, if not surpassed him, in this special instance. Let the connoisseur compare the Mercury and Pandora of Flaxman with the Sarpedon, as subjects akin in treatment if not in origin, and he will observe in the Mercury a forced or constrained action in the movement; in Watson's work, however, the motion of the Destiny or bearer of the hero is as volant and free as ether itself:

> "As if he floated there . . .
> By the sole act of his unlorded will,
> That buoy'd him proudly up."

The Sarpedon was electrotyped, and given to the late Sir Charles Eastlake, who valued it highly. It was also exhibited as a plaster bas-relief in the International Exhibition of 1862, at the instigation of Mr. J. H. Foley, the well-known sculptor and president of the Graphic Society. Able critics like Mr. Foley have compared the work with Flaxman's, and no doubt

the originality of the conception, as well as the excellence of the design, bespeak the genius and hand of a great master of the art.

THE VICTORIA ROOMS, BRISTOL.

The writer had occasion to visit Bristol for a few hours in February, 1865; and while standing near the Queen's Hotel, conversing with a friend, his eyes caught the pediment of the Victoria Rooms, when he remarked, that the sculpture reminded him strongly of a Cumbrian artist: the departure of the train prevented further inquiry. In a few weeks he returned to Bristol, and, standing outside the railed enclosure of the said institution, was much struck with the classical character of the group of figures occupying the pediment. Whilst still ignorant of the artificer, but with a strong bias in favour of Watson, a field-glass revealed, "T. Tyley, Sculp.," increasing the puzzle all the more; and, to add to the difficulty, the conservator of the rooms could give no information. Through the obliging secretary, it was ascertained that Mr. Dyer, the architect of the building, had commissioned Watson to make a classical group, in plaster of Paris, for the pediment, and the model is now in the Victoria Rooms. The writer called on "T. Tyley," who first

spoke of the work as his own, then acknowledged Watson's model; and, on being asked why Watson's name did not appear, whilst his ("T. Tyley's") did, seemed disconcerted, and replied, "You could not see my name from the street." The writer pointed to his field-glass. Further conversation showed that T. Tyley had offered a model for the pediment, which was not accepted by his townsmen (though they considerately gave him the copying of Watson's model in Bath stone); and, not wishing his local claims to be overlooked by posterity, had coolly carved his name as the sculptor of a work in which all the excellence of design belonged to another. As Watson's name was not known to some of the leading citizens, and the existence of his model doubted, T. Tyley had become master of the situation. The writer would have failed in his trust if he had omitted to notice this local chiselling by the Bristol burgher. It is the more imperative to call attention to this instance, as undue liberties have been taken with Watson's claims elsewhere; and it is to be hoped that Mr. Dyer, whose name appears as the architect, or those who represent him, or the institution, will endeavour to see justice done to Watson as the designer of a highly decorative work that gives character to one of the best edifices in Bristol.

The Victoria Rooms is a fine building of the Corinthian order, and meant for lectures, concerts, &c., and Watson's design

is highly appropriate. The Goddess of Wisdom is represented in a car drawn by horses—a model somewhat similar to the horses and chariot group of the Vatican Gallery. Music, Poesy, and Light, attended by her emblematic bird, guide the Goddess of Wisdom; while following in her path are the Graces, strewing flowers. Two flying figures precede the car—Night, clasping an owl to her bosom with her right hand, and holding drooping poppies in her left, while Morning, following in her wake, has an hour-glass in her hand extended towards the horses of Aurora, and opening flowers in her right. The work was hastily got up for a money price; but, had more pains been bestowed upon it, it would have been worthy of Watson's name as a composition strictly classical, and well adapted for the full display of his powers.

SMITH MEMORIAL AT LIVERPOOL.

In 1842, some Liverpool friends of the late Egerton Smith, a man of active benevolence, determined to erect a statue to his memory; and opinion seems to have been divided between Gibson, Watson, and Carew, as sculptors of the work. The commission was a small affair—only 200 guineas; but Watson expressed great anxiety "to do something for Liverpool." Knowing Gibson's local claims, Watson advised that the work

should be given to him; but if not, and there was to be a fair competition, he would try his best. There was much talk, and about as much jobbery, in the business. Watson, to a private friend, thus refers to Gibson:—"Though it is just the sort of thing in which I would succeed, I can excuse the 'look towards Rome,' where all is supposed to be classical. Gibson will do a neat thing on stilts, but there will be neither charity nor philanthropy in the work. All his works are measured from the Greek statues. He has no originality, but one of the best workmen of the day; beyond this he is not very great, and never will be more than he is. He deserves the 200 guineas." Again:—"I would make Smith's memorial the best work I ever had under my hands. No opportunity may occur again for the illustration of so favourable a subject. Gibson will fail in the mental part, but he will succeed in the execution." In a previous letter Watson had said, "I will make it a bold vigorous statue, but, at the same time, an Englishman from head to foot; not Mark Aurelius with the head of George the Third; nor Lord Erskine in Cicero's night-shirt." The favouritism, to call it by the mildest phrase, shown in the conducting of the preliminaries was so marked, that Watson asked his friends to withdraw his name.

The writer has been shown the Smith Memorial in the vestibule of the Free Library, but is happily ignorant of the

workman, and wishes to remain so. What it might have been in Watson's hands! One of his friends—a man of high classical taste—had expressed his disappointment, and feared Watson would feel the same, in not obtaining the commission; to which Watson replied, "Disappointment! Why, I am thankful that the curse"—in allusion to the small pay and smaller brains of the Committee of Direction—"has not fallen upon me. I am never upset by such matters, but I despise the tricks and jugglery of Committees."

MRS. BROUGHAM.

In 1843, or an earlier date, Watson modelled a statuette of Mrs. Brougham, the mother of Lord Brougham, sitting in a chair, with a book in her hand. Age, intelligence, and placidity, mark the work, and no treatment could have been more applicable, as sagacity and equanimity characterised Mrs. Brougham through life. Watson sent the model to the Newcastle Exhibition, without, however, assigning any title to it; and the lady represented being unknown, the largely draped figure, and the sombre facial lines, induced the Hanging Committee to catalogue Mrs. Brougham as a "Lady Abbess."

The work, executed in marble, would have been a valuable acquisition to Brougham Hall, and, if maternal commemoration

was ever worthy of a great man's thoughts, Mrs. Brougham merited all the posthumous honours that her son Henry could bestow; as from her he inherited his high mental capacity and worldly shrewdness.

It appears that Lord Brougham wanted a full-sized statue of his mother, but on seeing the statuette, of comparatively small price, and being further influenced in money matters by a home counsellor whom the public can have no difficulty in naming, wished to purchase the preparatory model. Watson, however, thinking that he should be paid for his design as originally contemplated, would not consent to his Lordship's offer. Watson was angry at the treatment he received, and, as a proof of his indignation, and probably on the Voltairean maxim—"pour encourager les autres"—cut the Broughams—lords *in esse* and *in posse*, as he would have done the most ordinary family of Browns.

SIR FOWELL BUXTON, BART.

The statuette of Sir F. Buxton looks like a companion figure to Mrs. Brougham. It was a competition model for a statue to be erected in Westminster Abbey. Mr. Thrupp obtained the commission. The study of the Brougham and the Buxton, as

preparatory lessons, could not fail to aid Watson in his Eldon and Stowell group—the sitting postures, drapery, and other relations of the figure being in some degree analogous. Many looked upon the Buxton as Watson's best figure till the Flaxman was modelled, and Watson himself did not condemn the work—a great fact in its favour.

CHAPTER X.

THE FRIEZE IN THREADNEEDLE STREET, LONDON.

THE London Royal Exchange was destroyed, by fire, in January, 1838. To meet the requirements of business, Mr. Moxhay, who had risen from shoemaking to be a man of enterprise in the City, undertook the erection of a Hall of Commerce in Threadneedle Street—doubtless with the view of its becoming a permanent institution. To make the building worthy of the great merchants, he sought the aid of the sculptor as well as the architect in the design—a fact highly commendatory of both his judgment and taste. The part played by Watson will be best understood by a letter to his sister—worthy of quoting at length, as exemplifying "the tricks of the trade" as well as Watson's adroit diplomacy.

"During the last few weeks I have been fagged and anxious. There is a large public hall going on in the City, whereon it was the wish of the parties to place a range of sculpture, in the form of a frieze, illustrative of Commerce and all its influential

consequences—the length of it nearly eighty feet, and the figures five and a half feet. I was poorly at the time, but tried hard to do something in the form of a classical composition, and get my drawing done in time to send in. It was the very thing for me, just after my own heart. Without interest I might not succeed, but I had hope; the jade jilts me now and then, but never forsakes me. My bantling made some impression, and I had a visit from the parties, whom I know nothing of—thanks to my Nelson's design for this. Mr. Behnes was a fellow competitor, with some others, and I knew not what steps to take to secure the ground I had made. After reflecting for a day, I wrote to the parties, expressing my views fully. I had another visit, and was informed that Sir F. Chantrey had been applied to by my visitors personally, in order to ascertain whether I could execute my compositions as well as I had drawn them. Sir Francis replied, that he did not know an artist of my name, and that he never heard of me before! This looked promising, certainly, but I did not feel surprised. At first, I scarcely knew what to say most adroitly, but out came the truth :—'Sir Francis does not speak correctly. He is not well, and I wish to ascribe his denial of me to any cause rather than an ungentlemanly or invidious feeling. Flaxman, Fuseli, and Northcote were all ready to shake me by the hand, and gave me encouragement; and I can still say that I am not unknown to Eastlake, Thorvaldsen, and Baily; but I will

refer you to none of them. If you doubt my capacity, doubt me altogether, or call the whole of the competitors together in your presence for four hours, without anything in the room except clay, boards, and ourselves. Decide on the person whom you see can do the best. I am ready to-morrow.' My price was then asked. Behnes opposed me, and offered his services gratuitously, on the ground that the opportunity was good and worth his while, on account of a City commission—the Royal Exchange, &c.

"I had another call. My estimate for the work considerably overstepped their calculations, and Mr. Behnes' *liberality* had some weight. Now, I thought I was driven to a corner, but, as Behnes has done this to beat me in one way after finding that he had been beaten in another, I will in self-defence sacrifice him, though with much compunction. I said that I was a poor person, and could boast of no capital but industry, and that I was surprised to find that, since my capacity had been questioned in one sense, Mr. Behnes's had not been questioned in another. 'Now, gentlemen, Behnes never made a composition of any note in his life, and he cannot do it yet, though fifty years of age. He applied to a friend of mine to make his present drawing to submit to you. My friend, not being master of such a work as you required, applied to me to make it under the rose—not knowing that I was a competitor along with Behnes.

I did not deceive my friend. I told him, and suggested and planned much of the very drawing which you possess, supposing it to be Behnes's, and of which you disapprove.' Enough! I closed the bargain for £500 this morning, and am now in a fair way for honour and emolument."

Being ignored by Chantrey, and nearly jockeyed by Behnes—"both honourable men!"—it was well for Watson's success in obtaining the commission that he had City business men to treat with. The work was got done in good time, and to the satisfaction of the worthy patron of Art—Mr. Moxhay, as well as of others and more competent judges of its merits.

The frieze, consisting of a continuous line of figures in the proportion of five and a half feet high, and extending seventy-three feet, and filling up the space between the windows and entablature, is a prominent character of the façade of the building in Threadneedle Street—now occupied by the London or Consolidated Bank. This unusually long bas-relief is intended to set forth the advantages and blissful influences of Commerce, and, as a specimen of architectonic sculpture, attracted the attention of the world of Art in London, in July, 1842. The absence of common-place, and the exhibition of sculpture not in isolated forms or patches, but as a consecutive frieze, and its being done by a man comparatively unknown, gave rise to much curiosity and comment.

This work, being an allegorical composition, had to be treated in the classical language of the art, and, at the same time, to bear a modern adaptation. This apparent drawback to the artist's meaning being understood by the public, was got over successfully by Watson's familiarity, and happy blending of the mythological, with the realistic views of commercial England.

An outline far beyond the necessarily diminutive photograph s essential to the full comprehension of this fine work. The figure of Commerce occupies the centre of the frieze, and, by her outstretched wings and arms, indicates a readiness to extend a welcome to all nations, and to bestow her blessings on every side of the globe. The upright attitude of this figure contrasts a little strongly with the rest, but it is no less effective in giving symmetry and balance to the surrounding groups. The figures on each side have special attributes, symbolising the physical and intellectual advantages with all the requirements of civilization resulting from commerce. On the dexter side of Commerce is a lion *couchant*, and representatives of Poesy, Music, Painting, and Hygeia; then Enterprise guided by Genius; and lastly, a group wistfully looking towards a winged male form, descending to the earth, and holding a quill in his left hand, and a branch of olive-leaf in the right—the messenger of peace and glad tidings. On the sinister side, next to Commerce is Peace reclining on a

shield, and approaching her are the bearers of cereals, fruits, and other produce of the earth; then Navigation, guided by Urania and others personifying geography and education; whilst to the extreme left are Indian savages, or types of an inferior race, shackled and dejected, looking imploringly towards Britannia, who holds in her right hand a flag, the emblem of liberty and protection to the slave.

In the interior of the building, and occupying the concavity of a dome-like structure, is another bas-relief by Watson, equally worthy of his powers, and by some supposed to excel the exterior frieze. It was a promising feature to see the sculptor aiding the architect in applying classical art to the adornment of a commercial mart, and the art itself reflecting by its treatment the physical and ethnological relations of man—the refining and intellectual influences—the spread of knowledge—the cultivation of peace and general civilization; and not less, the geographical sweep and magnitude of British Commerce.

The celebration of the opening of the Hall of Commerce was a great affair, and thoroughly British in style;—turtle soup, live lords (mayoral and ministerial), and three times three from a thousand guests. Watson was there, and dined off a penny roll and half a glass of sherry! In describing this meeting he wrote to his sister:—"You have no idea how delighted I was to see with what enthusiasm the fulfilment of this great and individual

enterprise was received, and thankful I felt that Providence had granted me life and strength to accomplish the humble part I had to perform."

Critics praised, and strangers sought introduction to the rising artist, and friends, able to judge, and not afraid to condemn, wrote gratifying letters, making the heart of Watson rejoice that at last he was in the way of being acknowledged on purely artistic grounds, and with the additional pleasure of writing his name on the walls of the Great City. Mr. Cockerell, a stranger to Watson, wrote from the Bank of England to him:—"I have derived so much pleasure from the contemplation of your bas-relief on Mr. Moxhay's building that I cannot refrain from the liberty of expressing it to you. Your meaning has been so poetically rendered, and so clearly to persons capable of reading this kind of design. . . . The images appear to me most significant and noble, and will, I trust, be found by others (as they have been remarkably to myself) highly elevating and delightful. I trust, therefore, that you will have a good outline of it published, and enable us to compare it with the conceptions of your great master, and my lamented friend, Flaxman, as well as the boasted works of the Continent of the present day."

The *Athenæum* in an able article, on "Sculpture in Architectural design" (July 9, 1842), drew attention to Watson's work

thus:—"While it cannot fail to attract notice, this very extensive piece of bas-relief will also bear critical examination as a work of Art, and does honour to the talent and poetical fancy of its author, M. L. Watson." A learned connoisseur in Art, who could write freely to Watson at all times, and never hesitated to find fault with his works, writes: "I have seen the basso-rilievo in Threadneedle Street, and I think you need not fear success after this monument of your powers. You ought to be very grateful to your patron who gave you this great opportunity. . . . The architecture is grand. I think your sculpture excellent and effective, and poetical; perhaps it is a little too real here and there, and too dramatic." A writer in *Fraser's Magazine* aptly described Watson's work as "free, fanciful, and poetic," and this opinion pretty nearly expressed the general sentiment.

This work of Watson's might be viewed as a small revivalism of English Art—an attempt to raise it to a higher status, and to bring sculpture and architecture into healthful co-operation, illustrative of each other's merits; recalling the efforts of Niccola Pisano at Siena, in the thirteenth century, which were extensively carried out by his pupils and others, who sought to ally the nobler art of sculpture with the masonic elevations, and to render the public buildings of Pisa, Pistoia, and Florence, the admiration of succeeding generations. Owing to the want of unison between

the sister arts, as they are called, London was far from rich in open-air *rilievi*, and presented no real example for guidance to Watson in the work. Flaxman's *rilievi* on Covent Garden, and Henning's frieze on the Athenæum Club—a copy from the Elgin Marbles—were among the best of their kind in the metropolis. The placing of sculptured forms on a building fitted for their reception was but an imitative work, with large example for guidance, while Watson's field for the display of his art was a plain extended surface or wall, wanting every accessory. Another difficulty more insuperable than wall surface, and assuredly more stolid than any masonry, was the imperfect education of the metropolitan mind to comprehend an innovation in Art, such as Watson's work appeared to be. A taste for the fine arts, even now (twenty-four years later), is comparatively rare, because the knowledge on which this feeling rests requires education, along with a comparison of the works of the great masters; implying study, and travel, and a special aptitude for Art.

Watson played his part well, when the opportunity offered of designing an original work, and of carrying out that further aim—so closely interwoven with his predilections and nationality—of modifying the art prejudices incidental to our insular position by planting classical growths, and grafting these on an architectural basis in the very heart of London. However imperfect Watson might consider his frieze to be—and he viewed it rather as a

probationary study to the realization of something better and grander—it showed originality, large conception, and no small amount of classical feeling. These were great points gained, and he hoped that the Hall of Commerce might be instrumental in educating the London mind beyond the routine fashion of the day, with all its hybrid styles, and its Gothic structures indefinably Gothicized.

The Egyptians, in this direction of Art, as in nearly every other province of human thought, would appear to have anticipated the rest of mankind by thousands of years. Their architecture, however gigantic in masonry, quaint or imposing in manner, was not left in plain unmeaning block,* but presented outlined figures of kings, queens, or hieroglyphic symbols—as legible in meaning to the Egyptian as the "banners on the outward wall" of Dunsinane. Standing some years ago by the propylea of the Temple of Luxor on which are traced the Egyptian and his foe, the battle array and trophies of war, the writer fancied that he looked upon one of the earliest indications of the bas-relief in history; the suggestive ideal of the frieze to the men of Greece and of a later age Probably in these scratched surfaces of the Nilotic temples, a kind of relieved intaglio, may be found the rudimentary traces of Greek Art, which being enhanced by a Doric grafting, gradually assumed

* The Pyramids form an exception to this statement.

a higher architectonic sculpture, and finally culminated in that truest and grandest of all edifices, the Parthenon itself.

The religious fervour that impelled the Greeks to erect temples to the gods had its adjuvant and hearty response in the national pride, aiming at the growth and nurture of brave men and women; and to gratify this high aspiration, the statues of Apollo and Zeus, and others, were arranged in the Choros, where the Spartan youth practised gymnastics and celebrated their solemnities. Here sculpture embellished the sister art, so as to aid the religious sentiment; whilst both united served to keep alive the legendary fictions or traditions, the struggles for freedom, the feats of prowess—the ennobling and the heroic deeds in history. There is enough of religious talk in England, with its four millions of sermons annually, and much fervid heat in the evangelical season, but Protestant fervour does not lie in the direction of high Art, nor will it seek decorative temples whilst Spurgeon and Cumming reign as Delphic oracles.

It is not so desirable, were it practicable, that the mythological element should so govern the embellishment of English architecture as to exclude all other suggestions or sentiments, though allegory may, in part, be desirable, till something better is forthcoming. If public edifices are made too costly *per se*, so that the higher sculpture is beyond the reach of English patrons—though it is seen what could be done for 500*l.* by Watson—Art might be

directed to the domesticated form of sculpture furnished by Pompeii—that City of the Dead, yet so impressingly alive in its teachings of both the fine and the industrial arts. Architects are not partial to sculpture-graftings upon their lines; they prefer to be single-handed in their work. Watson knew this well, and spoke in no measured terms * of their refusal to recognise that aid which would have made their own work so telling and improving.

This full-grown England of ours should be able to proclaim a new development of Art; at any rate, something better than a mere imitation of the past—Parthenonic or Pompeian. The types of these, and especially of the Acropolis and true antique, may still be held up as the grand ideal; but Athens is not England, and Apollo is not a Christian saint nor symbol; nor are the combats of the Centaurs and Lapithæ the Wars of the Roses. The genius of the age should have an expression of its own in Art, and England should be true to herself and her national characteristics. The archives of history are being daily ransacked for new facts, and new interpretations of the old, and biography, like a partially-explored mine, reveals fresh men, and these men afford fresh illustrations of the times in which they lived; and the arts and sciences in general move on *pari passu* with the progressive element of truth at work in every direction,—political, industrial,

* He said, "They (the architects) are all square and compass men, and I cannot work with them comfortably."

and geographical. Has England not its modern history, its triumphs by land and sea, its peaceful conquests and commercial enterprise, as subjects for æsthetic treatment? Why then should Art linger in the course, when the world of ideas has made progress its motto? Let Architecture and Sculpture seek a friendly union, hearty and national, so that Art may break away from the conventional lines of the simple academical, and seek the broader platform of a world's thoughts in the instructive, the poetical, and enlightening. Watson longed for this consummation, but had no money to carry out his ideas, and no patrons to afford him the opportunity.

Sculpture should endeavour to do for the formative what Wedgewood accomplished in ceramic art, and what Stephenson, Watt, and others have done for the broader technological institutes. Judging from the past of history derived from the Mediterranean shores and cities, the most lasting evidences of a nation's greatness are to be found in the national architecture and its decorative arts; and no civilized community would wish to leave bare walls and barren suggestiveness for posterity to point to; nor, if desirous of being judged by its own life, would it rest content with the borrowed plumage of another's glory. The architecture of a people, when the people themselves are gone to Hades, constitutes the geology of their humanity, upon which modern explorers build their estimates and historical generalizations. As

the organic remains in the earth's strata indicate the great epochs on the surface of the globe, so do the remains of the fine and industrial arts of ruined cities, over which time and decay have swept for ages, reveal the mental calibre and the social comforts of the populations which inhabited them—their knowledge, their freedom, and their general status in civilization.

CHAPTER XI.

THE ELDON AND STOWELL MONUMENT.

THE story, no less true than remarkable, of two lads of the name of Scott, "bred and born in canny Newcastle,"* rising by their own efforts from the grade of denizens of a dingy street in a northern seaport to the highest positions in the State, has been, and will continue to be, cited in illustration of the free and comprehensive basis of our constitution; and the noble

* They were truly Newcastle boys, though William, the eldest, just escaped being born in the same narrow lane as his brother, owing to the following circumstances. In 1745, the threatened approach of the Highlanders caused great apprehension in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and John Scott, coal-fitter, being anxious as to his spouse's situation, had her placed in a basket, and lowered over the walls of the city to the river side, whence a boat conveyed her to Heworth, on the southern bank of the Tyne, and in the county of Durham; and here, within two days of her removal, Mrs. Scott gave birth to twins, William and Barbara. William, by his Durham birth, enjoyed certain advantages at Oxford, and, on obtaining a scholarship there, paved the way to his brother John's education and success in life; if so, the Pretender's raid gave a lucky turn to the Scotts, and by a mode that would have hardly suggested itself to the imagination of the novelist.

rewards to individual enterprise awaiting Englishmen of all ranks and stations in life. Of these lads as William and John Scott, or as "Law Lords" in the enjoyment of the pomps and vanities of office, this biography is silent; but as their lives were historical, so did their *post-obit* memorials give rise to a curious chapter in the records of English sculpture.

The second Lord Eldon, wishing to preserve in the perpetuity of marble or bronze the names and dignities of his grandfather, the High Chancellor, and his great uncle, Baron Stowell, sought the aid and counsel of Sir F. Chantrey in 1840. The original idea with Lord Eldon was the placing of the two brothers as colossal statues on one pedestal, and to this notion Chantrey's opinion was specially directed. As it was also his lordship's wish to place the statues in New College, Oxford, Chantrey went down to examine the sites afforded by the College. After consulting with his friend George Jones, R.A., Chantrey acquiesced in Lord Eldon's views, and not only seemed much gratified with the commission, but used to boast that he would make the Eldon group his masterpiece, and the greatest statue in England. Nothing, however, got done beyond a few pen-and-ink sketches —and these were Mr. Jones's work—when Chantrey died, in November 1841. This was a great blow to Lord Eldon, who fancied, with many others, that Chantrey was the only sculptor for statuary work of the kind contemplated.

Early in March 1842, Lord Eldon called upon Mr. Allan Cunningham, for years the factotum and friend of Chantrey, to undertake the work. Cunningham requested a few days' consideration, for, though surrounded by Chantrey's best assistants, he was not disposed to attempt so great a commission without a particular friend's aid. This friend was Watson, whose work in Chantrey's studio had come under his cognizance, and whose rare ingenuity and powers of modelling indicated him to be the sculptor of the day. Cunningham called upon his associate of former years, and found him by no means amiable at first sight; but on asking his (Watson's) co-operation in a great work, adding that without his aid he would not undertake it, Watson softened, and became gracious with his visitor, saying, "I will do my best to please you, Cunningham." During March and April Lord Eldon and Mr. Cunningham had frequent consultations. Early in May Watson came more prominently forward in the work, and his correspondence with his friend enables the writer to trace the growth of the work, and the relative position of the parties engaged in it, till the time of Cunningham's death at the end of the year 1842.

Watson writes on the 13th May to "Dear Cunningham,—The architect deserves a medal with an owl on it for his non-interference." This is evidently an allusion to Sir C. Barry, who had been consulted by the heads of the College at Oxford

as to Lord Eldon's proposal, and sanctioned it. On the 19th Watson had been drawing a mace in Cunningham's house, and writes: "The mace is only a bauble, and, in order to imbue the drawing with a high and true poetic spirit, I must imagine it to be the wand of enchantment. Good Lord, deliver us!" It is evident that Watson was then engaged with a sketch of his own for the Eldon group, to which allusion will be presently made, for in a letter to his sister during the summer he writes,—

"I have pleased Lord Eldon at last with a sketch. It is not to my feeling, but I must do as his lordship wishes in some degree, and put up with the evils attending the differences of opinion between a lord and an artist. . . . He (Lord E.) often stays two hours, is very good, and always considerate, and princely as a patron. Mr. Cunningham tells me that there were many artists' names put forward by noble lords for this group, but it fell to my lot; and for this I am entirely indebted to Cunningham."

About this time Lord Eldon called upon Watson, and "took away the group," most likely Chantrey's sketch, "which," says Watson, "could render me no assistance." He further suggested to his lordship that it might be some advantage to await showing this group until another could be placed alongside of it, and that nothing would be gained unless Lord E. withheld his

opinion as to the merit of the two groups, until the parties to whom they were shown had expressed an impartial preference to either one or the other. That Watson was deeply absorbed in a design of his own is clearly shown throughout his correspondence with Cunningham, and that Lord Eldon was frequently supervising the sketches and suggesting his own ideas to the sculptor is well seen by a letter of July 12th:—

"DEAR C.—You will perhaps think that I feel worried by Lord E.'s exactness in one thing and indifference in another. You need not do so, because I am quite aware that the more objections are raised, the better the group is likely to be eventually. . . . . The quiet dignity and mental superiority of the first judge in the land ought to be of far more importance in a group than the official trappings of his court, but they ought to be sufficiently important to designate the office. . . . . The idea of the chair appears to meet with Lord Eldon's sanction, so that we are progressing very fairly. . . . I can only have one view, namely, to support proprieties and show good and judicious taste. In his lordship's eye I have no claim to attention as an artist, and it is only on what I say that his lordship can be induced to give way by showing him the better reason. I may have said more to-day than Lord E. thought necessary, but it is possible that a man plain-spoken may be honest, and in this I rest my excuse. . . . You looked

fagged to-day. I am now going to enjoy a crust of bread and a bit of fresh butter with a glass of——water." *

Lord Eldon bestowed much attention on the group, and asked everybody's criticism, and then returned to Cunningham and Watson—sometimes wearying the patience of the latter, upon whose shoulders fell the great responsibility. While the group is still *sub judice*, Watson writes:—"The group is not satisfactory to me, it never will be, it is impossible it should be so. There will always be something wanting, because something more and something better will be figured in the mind." As the dog-days of 1842 passed away, the discussion of the plans came to an end, and Lord Eldon gradually approximated to Watson's views, and finally yielded to his better reasons. Watson wrote: "Lord E. was here yesterday, and Briggs, R.A., nearly three hours, and wearied me very much. Mr. Cunningham accompanied them. I have got my own way at last, but I have had a hard fight for it. Lord E.'s notion of the group is mean, common, and domestic. I have done two groups 'this way' for him—very

* Watson's letters were full of fun, along with his Art suggestions. On the 13th July, he contrasts Lord Eldon's munificent outlay of 4,000*l.* for drawings of Raphael and M. Angelo, with the shabbiness of the Grey administration towards Art. There was a hearty freedom in his correspondence with Cunningham; thus, in the letter quoted in the text, he adds, "I beg you won't write *French* with the *English* alphabet in a *Scotch* dialect, unless you have it in contemplation to propagate an unknown tongue."

unsatisfactorily to myself. He has now given me liberty to execute a group as I think fit, and without his interference."

Watson being congratulated by Cunningham on having had a visit from Mr. Rogers the poet, writes in reply: "Rogers is very keen. Had I felt his match Lucifer might have shown between us. I noticed that his skull was peculiar in form; it looked like the voyage of Columbus, a long way round." No one out of the art circle who visited the studio of Watson gave him so much pleasure as Rogers, and both poet and sculptor thoroughly understood each other, and with a hearty appreciation of each other's merits.

Early in September, Watson's sketches, or designs, were approved by Lord Eldon, who now wished to know the cost of the proposed models. Up to this time, Watson had looked upon the work as a joint commission with Cunningham, and offered to divide the profits with his friend, or to leave the pecuniary matters entirely to his decision. Mr. Cunningham, however, wished the responsibility to rest with Watson, promising to give Lord Eldon the benefit of his counsel and superintendence of the work; so that Watson had to make his own terms, which were — to undertake, for 500*l.*, the sketches and third-size models, and for 500*l.* more the full-sized models.*

* The agreement between Lord Eldon and Watson had been drawn up by Cunningham, and to which Watson thus refers:—"You (Mr. C.) have

On the 13th October, Lord Eldon formally agreed to Watson's terms, and now the "third-size models" had progressed so far, that Watson writes:—"The Twins are now *lying* in state, as they were wont to do in their political life." This seems to have been his last letter to his "best friend," whose declining health struck Watson more and more as autumn advanced. With the fall of the leaf Allan Cunningham succumbed, and within a year of his patron, Sir Francis Chantrey (namely, on the 5th November, 1842), died—a loss to literature and the arts. His death affected Watson greatly, as the following letter to Peter Cunningham shows:—

"When the heart is full, it is difficult to speak. I grieve, but feel unable to express my sorrow. Had your revered parent survived a few years, I should not have stood in need of another friend. He had a sincere wish to encourage me, and we perfectly understood each other. The same feeling had existed for years, but there was a difficulty on your father's part, situated as he was with so mean a man as Sir Francis, to aid me. It is too true that I have to lament the loss of the best and most able friend I ever had. My past life has been quiet, and my well-intentioned efforts unnoticed and unknown. With Lord

added two words, ability and skill: these are at your service gratuitously. I cannot say that they are worth money—like some of your sweet and vigorous poems, they may not be paid for."

Eldon I have no influence, except through the past recommendations of my friend, whose voice can no longer aid me. I am again alone. Pray remember me kindly to your good mother and sisters. Sincerely condoling with you all, and with many thanks for your note."

As Mr. Cunningham was believed to have had the management of the Eldon work, his death put the London sculptors on the *qui vive*, and Lord Eldon had numerous applications, direct and otherwise, for the commission. Watson took no action in the matter. He knew the estimation in which he was held by Lord Eldon, and that the agreement between them, though altered by Cunningham's death, gave him a prior claim; but, in all probability, his inaction arose from the consciousness that he alone was master of the situation, and that the more independent he appeared, the better for himself. However this may have been, the patron called upon the sculptor in the course of a few weeks; as a pen-and-ink sketch—"No. 1. First notion for a new design for the Eldon group, pedestal and canopy. M. L. W. Dec. 21"—indicates fresh plans in contemplation. In March 1843, memoranda relating to the College at Oxford, with drawings, are further evidence of an alteration in the group—the mace and other "trappings of office" being withdrawn; and yet, with apparently diminished labour, the sculptor was to have greatly increased pay. Whilst Cunningham lived, Watson looked

upon himself as a subaltern; now he is commander, with the further vantage-ground of knowing that Lord Eldon and his advisers looked upon him as "the only man in England who could do the work." Cunningham's words to Lord Eldon were, "There is no man in England who can model like Watson, and no man can do justice to these colossal figures (Eldon and Stowell) but himself"—high praise, and happily bestowed.

Watson's first sketch, or, to speak in less technical language, the small models for the Eldon group, were a success, and pleased Lord Eldon beyond words; so that no price demanded by the sculptor could well have disturbed his high gratification with the primary steps to the future monument. Watson led his assistant to believe that he received 1,000*l.* for these thirteen-inch sketches. If Watson had not deceived himself in his money calculations, a model in clay of two figures, only thirteen inches high, fetching 1,000*l.* to the designer, may be fairly viewed as one of the greatest facts in the history of British sculpture. Was it the concentration of Art-power derived from twenty years' service that took possession of Watson's mind, or had he risen, with the subject of his commission, to a mighty lord-dom and woolsack of greatness in Art when he asked, and obtained, 1,000*l.* for the sketch and its pedestal?*

* Lawyers have received great fees, and doctors, though rarely, greater than lawyers; but the halcyon days of Art had come, when out of a piece of

The intimate friends of Watson have always maintained that the design of the Eldon and Stowell figures was entirely his own, and that the only guides he had to the portraiture were a bust of Lord Eldon by Behnes, a medallion, and "some prints" in the possession of the family; the writer can unhesitatingly endorse the general opinion, and on grounds beyond all possible dispute.

Whilst the large models were in progress, Lord Eldon often visited the studio, and on one occasion, seeing the sculptor's slight form almost buried in wet clay, and evidently suffering from the exertion, said, "Now, Mr. Watson, if you should lose your health on this work of mine, you shall have a pension of £75 a year for life." Watson's mind, as well as body, were greatly tried by the work; and much of his rheumatism was attributed to the damp clay in the long modelling process; indeed, many of his friends were of opinion that the Eldon

clay not much larger than two thick crown octavo volumes, a sculptor could fabricate £1,000. Sir Astley Cooper, a few days after performing a capital operation, had a night-cap thrown at him by his convalescent patient as he was leaving the bedroom. Sir Astley, wise in his generation, pocketed the affront, and, on arrival at home, found a cheque inside the cap for a thousand guineas! A learned obstetric professor, now living in the north, having the credit of making things pleasant to wedded life, when hopes have been long deferred,—moreover, having the honour in a special case of this kind of presenting in the course of time a son and heir as valid proof of his system,—received, it is said, 5,000 guineas as his fee!

group gave the last blow to his already debilitated frame. The large models were completed in 1845, and shared, in no small degree, with the pleasure that the birth of a son gave to the house of Eldon that year. Watson had lots of visitors, and in mentioning these to his sister wrote:—"Eastlake came to see my colossal group. He did not say much, but appeared happy in its completion. He has since written one of the most nobly liberal letters to me on it that a man of eminence could write." Knight, the portrait painter, and others, pleased Watson by their inspection and judicious criticism; whilst others offended him by the high laudatory tone of their remarks. Watson wrote:—"Lord Eldon is pleased with, and proud of, the group, and named the birth of his son and the completion of the work together as affording him extreme pleasure. I have done many works for self and other men, often wearied, and oftener disgusted, but the Eldon and Stowell has cost me more real labour and difficulty than all I ever tried to do. I cannot tell you how thankful I am, and how contented, in degree, I feel, that it is off the mind, and, far beyond all that, my patron is satisfied. Still, I could not work for several days, feeling that I had parted with two old friends. I remember Gibbon said the same in writing the last line of the 'Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,' the companion of his nights and days for many years."

To obtain marble for the statues was a great consideration and difficulty, and, as one block for the entire work, impossible.* At length a block for one figure was got in London that cost £300, and Watson began the Stowell figure upon it, which he partially sculptured throughout, probably to the extent of three-fifths of the carving, when his health gave way, and he could do no more. Watson during his life received £2,500, and his administrator obtained £1,750 more, in accordance with the estimate of Sirs R. Westmacott and C. L. Eastlake, for the work; in other words, £4,250 was paid Watson and his executor for the large models, the single block of marble, and the "partially sculptured figure" of Lord Stowell. At this rate of payment, Watson would have realized (had he lived to complete the figures) £7,000 or £8,000 for the group. The remaining carving of the Stowell, and the whole of the Eldon figure, was completed by Watson's assistant and friend, George Nelson, who obtained at least £1,750 for work, the carriage to Oxford, and placing the statues in University College.

* The quarrymen of Carrara were startled by Watson's demand for such a stupendous block as the two figures required (which they could not furnish), and fancied John Bull getting out of all proportions in statuary, as he had long been in other directions. Possibly the Italians rose to a more thorough recognition of what "My lords English" require during life, when they found that all the ordinary calculations of hewers of stone for the rest of Europe were insufficient to commemorate the types of the English, and that as in life so in death, "my lords" were magnificent.

The deaths of Chantrey, Cunningham, and Watson, were not the only fatalities attending the Eldon group. In 1842, the Heads of New College agreed to take the statues, but in 1844 found they had no space; so Lord Eldon had to offer them to University College. The arrangements for the reception of the statues were not completed in 1854, when Lord Eldon died, and unhappily in ignorance of what would become of the great work he had so much idolized. A new library had to be erected to admit the statues, and Lord Eldon's executors, with the sanction of the Court of Chancery, gave £5,200, if not more, to aid the College in the building. The library, to the erection of which the authorities of the College contributed £2,000, was finished under Mr. G. G. Scott's direction in 1860, and the statues, not without much hazard, eventually found a place within its walls. Independently of any remuneration that Cunningham may have received, or Watson, previous to his second engagement, the Eldon and Stowell group as a statuary work cost upwards of £6,000; the library, £5,200; the seven years' rental of a studio in London, £420; but in all probability the entire cost was not less than £14,000. After so much expenditure, it may appear harsh to complain of the light and space in the library as being inadequate to show, in all their significance, so noble a group. The pedestal, it ought to be added, was designed by Mr. G. G. Scott, and is of Sicilian marble, simple and effective, and bearing

the names of the "illustrious brothers." Visitors to Oxford will not find the name of the sculptor (Watson) inscribed on the work—an oversight that ought to be remedied at once—not forgetting what is due to Mr. Nelson for completing the carving of his master's great work.

The Eldon and Stowell group unquestionably ranks with the first works of Art in Great Britain. It is said to be the largest statuary marble work—Watt's being the second in point of size, —and, probably, the costliest of its class. Looking at the group in a Gothic recess, and imperfectly lighted, the first impression is not so favourable; but on tracing the family resemblance of the two brothers, their judicial robing, the mind becomes reconciled to their sitting posture on one pedestal, whilst a closer examination reveals a work of high excellence in sculpture. The severe attitude and solemn air of the "Law Lords," so indicative of impartial justice, and the Shakespearian portrait of "wise saws and modern instances," are fully exhibited. The venerable Chancellor, with his right arm resting on a chair, and his left on the knee slightly elevated, sits in calm repose, marking the utterances of "noble lords," or as the deliberate judge with the schoolboy's impression of "*Sat cito, si sat bene,*" still reigning in his mind, without recollecting whether the reversion of the motto, "*Sat bene, si sat cito,*" had its due influence in his decisions. Lord Stowell supports a book on his right knee, allowing his

left to rest at ease like the Chancellor, and everything is in good keeping with the idea of

> "Statued forms, that look from their seats
> With a cold smile serenely."

The treatment of the work is as broad as the structures are massive. The drapery is rendered easy and expressive where much technical observance was required to mark the official character of the "Grand Judges," and this feature naturally adds greatly to the excellence of the work. The portraits are life-like, calm, and dignified, whilst an elevated simplicity and grandeur rules throughout the whole composition. The princely munificence of the second Lord Eldon, the costliness of the group, and the numerous fatalities surrounding the design, sculpturing, and final placing of the statues,—though curious and rare circumstances—belong to the class of current events; but it is to be hoped that a more permanent and lasting interest will be found in the work itself, as one occupying the foremost rank in the school of British sculpture in the middle of the nineteenth century.

Mr. F. T. Palgrave, whose "Essays on Art," first published in the *Saturday Review*, and lately issued as a separate volume, can be read with singular profit and pleasure, instances six "truly fine monumental works which have been produced within

FRATRES ILLUSTRES

JOHANNES SCOTT COMES DE ELDON

the century;"* and amongst these, places the Eldon and Stowell group. Possibly the same work was held in view by Mr. Palgrave, when he spoke of Watson "uniting lofty feeling to singular dignity of line,"—a happily-expressed criticism.

Fraser's Magazine (February, 1845) says: "We have seen these twin-statues (Eldon and Stowell): the two noble brothers are represented in their robes of state, sitting on an equality side by side. They look the very pillars of Law and Justice—as grave as Fortescue and Littleton, and as fine, artistically speaking, as Flaxman's figure of Mansfield, or Chantrey's Cyril Jackson." A work that could be compared with and rank alongside Flaxman's Mansfield, than which Canova saw nothing finer in English sculpture, had received the highest commendation that could be bestowed.

Mr. Rogers the poet invariably spoke of the Eldon group as the finest statues in England. With the zeal of an enthusiast, and all the pleasure that could mark the feelings of a coadjutor in the work, he had traced the development of the design in Watson's hands. When the group was done in the marble, and his friend the sculptor was no more, he stood in front of the

* "Essays on Art," by Francis Turner Palgrave. London, 1866. It is worth noting here that Mr. Palgrave names Behnes's "Babington" on his favoured list, a work already shown in this biography to have been Watson's, with the exception of the bust.

work, and, pointing stedfastly to the figures of the two brothers, thus apostrophised them:—"Ah, John Eldon! you liked that grand old port of mine; and (after a slight pause) so did you, William Stowell, and right well you punished it—both of you." Then the aged bard, assuming a graver tone, as if influenced by a solemn regret for the loss of him who had designed so noble a work, and been carried to his grave before he could receive the homage due to his genius, said to his friend close by:—"Ah, Sir, I have been preaching to the people for years that they had a great man amongst them. They will find it out now that he is gone. Poor Watson!" With these touching words on his lips Rogers withdrew, as if unable to say more.

Chantrey, Jones, Cunningham, and Nelson, have had the credit of originating or doing the Eldon group, and the *Illustrated London News*, in giving an engraving of the work among the leading statuary of the Great Exhibition (1851), headed their notice "the Eldon Group by Marshall"! The foregoing history will prove that Watson was the true sculptor.

The Eldon and Stowell group, and statue of Flaxman, were exhibited in the Great Exhibition of 1851, and Her Majesty's Commissioners, in the words of the award, "presented a Prize Medal to M. L. Watson for statue of J. Flaxman in marble; and Eldon and Stowell group, also in marble." Poor Watson was then beyond the reach of earthly honours!

CHAPTER XII.

THE CAMERON MONUMENT — ROYAL EXCHANGE — QUEEN ELIZABETH — CARLISLE STATUES—SWEEP—CUNNINGHAM MEMORIAL —WILKIE—ST. VINCENT—ROGERS' HUMAN LIFE ILLUSTRATED.

THE Cameron monument arose out of a painful episode in the Scottish Rebellion of 1745. Dr. Archibald Cameron joined his fortunes with those of "Bonnie Prince Charlie," and acted as surgeon in the last struggle of the "Stuarts" on the field of Culloden. The horrid severity of the Duke of Cumberland induced all the noted partisans of the Pretender to seek safety abroad. After seven years of exile, and thinking that the Government of the Georges had slaked its thirst for blood, Cameron came back to his Scottish home. He was at once informed of, taken to London, tried, and executed. Considering Cameron's services on the field to both friend and foe,

> "And ever when the battle's din was o'er,
> 'Mid paths of mercy studious to explore,"

his long banishment, and the irrevocably fallen dynasty which he espoused, the sentence was cruelly vindictive — outraging

English feeling, and scaring the heart of many a brave Highlander.

A century elapsed, and Mr. Charles Hay Cameron, a lineal descendant of "Archibald the good and kind," having discovered the record of his interment in the Savoy Chapel, London, engaged Watson to erect a fitting memorial to him.* Watson, seeing the tyranny of the procedure which led Cameron to the scaffold, designed a figure, or rather an allegorical composition, of Innocence. A girl in the nude was represented as seated on a rocky eminence, and around her neck and arms a serpent twining, and above an eagle with full-spread wings. This *alto-rilievo* was refused admission by the chapel authorities, on the ground that, as the reigning dynasty had condemned Cameron, the emblem of Innocence might give offence. It was fortunate for Art that Watson had to make a second trial of his ingenuity, in which he represented the Doctor on a field of battle, surrounded by the wounded, the dying, and the dead; and succeeded in achieving a most meritorious work;—worthy of his best days.

* The Right Honourable E. Ryan, being asked by Mr. Cameron to employ the best sculptor for the purpose, after walking through the studios of London, had the fine discrimination to see that Watson was the man for the work, and his decision met with the hearty approbation of Mr. Bellenden Ker, whose good services had also been in request by the Cameron family.

In an *alto-rilievo* composition (7 feet 9 inches by 3 feet 1 inch) there are eleven figures represented, and these constitute four distinct groups, and each group of itself a complete study in sculpture. The Doctor is the central figure, slightly stooping, and in the act of bandaging the arm of a wounded soldier—the assistant of whom looks inquiringly at the Doctor's visage. On his right is a woman, upon whose lap rests the head of a wounded man, and she is imploring the Doctor's help. Another soldier is apparently dead, the upper part of his body resting on a woman's knee, and embraced by her right arm; while her left protects a sleeping infant. This woman's head is a fine study. In looking upwards for aid beyond the mortal, as if the spirit of her husband had passed away, she expresses, beyond words, a soul struggling in its anguish of bereavement, and seeking the heavenly and the comforting. On the Doctor's extreme left, two men are carrying off a dead body. This is a simple outline of the figures, but it is not too much to say, that each individual of the separate groups could be made interesting in description; so full of meaning and character is the work throughout. It was well said of this composition that it was "worthy of any period of sculpture," and that though "the subject and the time were of great difficulty," the work "will be memorable in the history of any school."

Each form or figure is well defined by a careful yet subdued

anatomy, and there is more than a mere functional manifestation in the countenances—a psychological element, vivid, and, in some instances, highly exalted in character. The work, in its entirety, is an exemplification of Art in one of its grandest relations, and Watson has treated the subject with all the feeling of a sympathetic nature, and in a manner thoroughly reflective of the scene presented towards the eve of the Pretender's defeat and flight, when

> "Culloden's dread echoes were hush'd on the moors,"

and women searched the field for their lost husbands and brethren. Looking to the groups of figures and all the well-blended accessories in this *alto-rilievo*, the mind is carried back to the heart-rending drama on the field of Culloden—the last overthrow of the Scottish Celt on his own ground, by the usurping Saxon—and beholds, the brave soldier suffering, yet composed; the devoted woman nursing and imploring; and the glorious humanity of the surgeon combating with the inhumanities of war. Cameron's partisanship was forgotten in the conflict, and of his services it might be truly said,—

> "To soothe the sufferer then was all thy thought,
> Whate'er the banner under which he fought;
> Thy hand would staunch the blood of him who bled,
> Were it for Brunswick or for Stuart shed."

A harmony of relation marks the grouping of the figures, whilst, in force of expression, the tool of the sculptor seems to rival the pencil of the painter; the carved lines in stone vying, in effect, with the coloured lights and shadows on canvas; illustrating the sufferings and emotions of our species. The Doctor's face, position, and professional bearing are effectively rendered; and the heavenly appeal of the woman alongside her dead husband, elicits the homage of tenderness that is felt in contemplating the "Divine Passion," of Carlo Dolce's painting. No doubt "the Cameron" is one of Watson's happiest efforts, exhibiting the highest qualities—the very pathos of Art. The work was carved in Caen stone, and placed in the Savoy Chapel in 1847, but, unfortunately, fell amongst the ruins of the fire that destroyed the Chapel in 1864. The original cast was sold with Watson's effects, and is now in the possession of the Messrs. Nelson, Carlisle, occupying a wall of their marble show-rooms. Below the carving was a large slab for inscription, and around the frame-work, sword, Lochaber axe, and other emblems of the historical associations of the period. The following lines formed the epitaph,—

"Far better had bleak Gladsmuir seen thee slain
In Victory's arms, or Falkirk's laurell'd plain,
Or dark Culloden closed thine earthly toil,
Where Charles last stood a prince on British soil."

The descendants of Cameron were greatly pleased with the monument, and the letter given below will prove how little one hundred years had done to efface their love for one as

"Brave and gentle as his own Lochiel."

Miss Cameron writes to a friend:—"I have thought a great deal about the monument since I saw it. I believe that even without the very deep interest I feel in the subject, I should think it quite beautiful. As it is, it seems to be the most touching representation of my amiable ancestor that could have been selected. I hope I shall see it again in a calmer moment. If you see Mr. Watson again, and it will be any gratification to him to hear it, pray tell him how much the descendants of Dr. Cameron are satisfied and delighted with his work." This letter shows grand feeling—a century of cherished ancestral love embalmed in the family memory, and coming forth as fresh and vivid in its sorrowful display to the third or fourth generation, as if the flood-gates of humanity had just broken down in tears under an immediate bereavement. Though the Stuarts are gone, root and branch, to the tomb of all the Capulets, a superstitious fealty to their cause may still be found amongst the Isles of Scotland, and, however incredible it may appear to Southern readers, there are in Edinburgh* itself,

* The writer may claim indulgence for narrating a circumstance, illus-

remnants of the old clans to be met with, whose reverence for a lost and never-to-be-restored dynasty, is quite refreshing to witness in this apathetic age—so little moved by either politics or patriotism.

The *Art Journal* said of Cameron: "This is an *alto-rilievo* composition distinguished by the highest quality of Art. The

trative of the tenacity with which the Jacobite feeling is held by the true Highlander, even in these latter days. In the winter of 1845, exactly a century after the '45, he joined an evening party in Edinburgh, and was introduced to a young lady from one of the isles in the far north: "This is my friend, Dr. Lonsdale, of Carlisle; allow me to introduce him, Miss ——." The lady, who was about to receive the doctor as graciously as a well-educated person in good position in life could do, no sooner heard the word Carlisle, than she drew back, and with her head and arms disdainfully thrown upwards, said, "What? Carlisle! I hate the very name of Carlisle; that horrid place, where we suffered in the '45." The Highland blood curdled at the name of Carlisle, recalling no doubt its "Harrabee," and barbarous hangings of Charles's followers, and the "Scotch Yetts" reviving the sad words of a song—

"His long, long hair, in yellow hanks,
Waved o'er his cheeks sae sweet and ruddy;
But now it waves o'er Carlisle yetts,
In dripping ringlets, soil'd and bloody."

The gentleman who attempted the introduction, himself of the same Highland race, had the discretion to withdraw the doctor from the excited partisan of the Stuarts:—

" . . . a lioness, though tame.
Her father's blood . . . . .
Boil'd up, and proved her truly of his race."

principal figure represents a surgeon assisting the wounded, by whom he is surrounded on the field of battle. With infinite skill and judgment, the sculptor has sunk almost every absorbent and individual accessory, and produced a work of purely classical character, the various parts of which are bound together by a common relation, of the most refined and elevated character. The work is of our time, but it leads us back to the best periods of Greek Art." Mr. Foley, one of the most distinguished living sculptors, when asked to look at the Cameron memorial some years ago, said, he could find no fault but one, that the work was not done in marble. The last exhibited works of Watson's at the Royal Academy in 1847, were the Cameron, and Hebe and Iris, and both works received great approbation.

THE ROYAL EXCHANGE PEDIMENT.

The Grand Gresham Committee of the Royal Exchange, wishing to adorn the pediment of the building in the Grecian style of Art, offered, or professed to offer, the work for general competition.* Though Watson's experiences of architects and com-

* The *Art Journal* (Feb. 1843) was of opinion that only three artists were invited or admitted to compete—Joseph, Westmacott, and Watson.

mittees had been far from satisfactory, he entered the arena in the hope of the public advertisement being a *bonâ fide* solicitation for the best man. The composition of a frieze, after the Greek model, was just the thing for Watson. He loved to revel in original thought, and to seek new paths in Art—the poetical and the classical—and here was a field for the exercise of both upon an undertaking, if not strictly national, at any rate metropolitan, and highly English. To Watson it was the Hall of Commerce frieze repeated, but with higher privileges. The Royal Exchange offered a classical architecture, the aid of light and space, and the greater aid of æsthetic freedom in the adornment of a grand public edifice for the uses of the greatest commercial city in the world.

Watson's spirit of emulation was fairly roused by this golden opportunity, and he strove to make a design worthy of the building, hoping no doubt to hand down to posterity the higher excellencies of his Art, and to write his name on one page at least of his country's history—the commercial. He showed his usual ability and superiority, and, had due award been made, his carved work would have excelled his admirable drawing; and "England proclaiming from the steps of her Royal Exchange universal commerce to all nations," would have been rendered in the sculpture of classical forms adapted to modern usage and civilization by a great master. The work fell to Messrs. Joseph

and Westmacott, and a great opportunity was lost of securing the services of a man who would have redeemed one exterior from the mediocrity so painfully marked in the public buildings of the metropolis. It might well be said by a leading journal, that "There was something like great precipitation, or something worse, when it is known that the decision was made at once on the day following that on which the designs were sent in." If the Grand Greshamites could arrive at a correct decision, and conclude the business—*uno die et uno ictu*—they had bid fair to rival the Japanese "happy despatch." The fact of Mr. Westmacott asking Watson if he would assist him, in case he got the work, showed the direction of the wind with more than Fitzroyan accuracy, and the Gresham award was another blot to the already darkly blotted page recording the public competitions for Art prizes in England.

Watson sent his drawings for the Exchange to the Royal Academy, announcing the fact of their rejection in competition with Joseph and Westmacott; and this bold step caused no little talk in Art circles, whilst comparisons were freely instituted between Watson and his rivals, rather "odorous" to the latter. The feeling was almost unanimously in favour of Watson's design, and had it been executed, would have shone worthy of the metropolis, and helped the Canovas of a future age to say better things of our sculpture and treatment of Watson than the living

Canova could say of our works of Art, or our recognition of Flaxman at the beginning of the century.

When Watson was disconcerted by want of success in obtaining commissions, or vexed at the non-appreciation of his works, he seems to have felt with Horace—

"Usque ego posterâ
Crescam laude recens"

—as he remarked to a friend: "When I am gone, my works will be more understood, and probably more highly valued; and the better I make them, the better for my fame." Noble words! worthy of being attached to his Royal Exchange, his Wilkie, and other competitions, where he was so unjustly treated by wrong-headed and wrong-hearted arbitrators.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

The Grand Gresham Committee, utterly regardless of Art requirements, expected works of merit to be done within the time necessary for erecting a portico, or flagging a large hall. They lost Gibson's services by their haste, and nearly drove Watson to the grave by compelling him to execute his commission for a statue of "Queen Bess" for the Royal Exchange in three months. Watson said that the exertions to himself were most

oppressive, as well as to all engaged in the stone work, and that he did not wish for any similar commission in future. The work is among the least satisfactory of Watson's public undertakings; and had it been worthy of him, it would have been the more mortifying to see it placed where it is, in a dark corner of the quadrangle—a position by no means flattering to the judgment of the architect. What foreigner would look for a portrait-statue of the famous Queen Elizabeth under a ceiling many yards from the light in a recess little better than a dust-bin, or something worse? Yet these "Grand Gresham Committees," "Woods and Forests," and Government Commissions, are your gods of Art, O Israel!

THE CARLISLE STATUES—AGLIONBY AND LONSDALE.

The stranger who has a few minutes to spare in Carlisle, may see, within a stone's throw of the railway station, one of the best open-air statues that England can boast of—the Earl of Lonsdale's, standing between two massive round towers, the Courts of Assize; and within the Court, on his left hand, another statue to Major Aglionby, vying in excellence with "the Lonsdale" on the main street, but entirely lost to the public by its position. Both statues are from Watson's hands, and

both are unexceptionably fine, and characteristic of his manly and vigorous style.

Major Aglionby, M.P. and Chairman of Quarter Sessions, suddenly expired (June 1, 1840) at the door of the Court on his way to the Bench, and the gentlemen of the county decided to erect a portrait statue of him near the scene of his judicial labours as well as his death. After much discussion,* Watson was empowered to work a seven-feet figure in Caen stone. There was no portrait of Major Aglionby to guide Watson, but luckily one of the Miss Aglionbys bore so much resemblance to her father, that her face could be taken as a type,

* Watson expected both commissions, on account of his county claims, but competition, of a kind, was resorted to, and he carried the day. The character of the Cumberland sculptor should have been well known to an educated bench of magistrates; but in addition to this bucolic illiterateness amongst the landed gentry, and the general absence of æsthetic taste against which Watson had to contend in the county, there were men dressed up in a little brief authority strutting across the stage of Quarter Sessions—talking squires, a bullying, querulous clerk, officious majors, and would-be sycophants of the newly-installed Earl of Lonsdale, who opposed every suggestion but their own, worried Watson with their trumpery notions of Art, and annoyed him exceedingly. The correspondence necessary to meet the antagonistic forces of stupidity and self-arrogance prevailing in Cumberland, took up much of Watson's most valuable time. In reference to this uncalled-for interference with his plans, he wrote that he would "willingly give everybody his own way in Carlisle or the county but Major —— ;"—a Scotchman on English soil, more Scottish than the Scotch.

and this sufficed, with the aid of friends, to enable Watson to realize a capital likeness. The Major is represented in a standing attitude, firm, commanding, yet not severe; in the dress of a country gentleman, with an outer toga elegantly tied across his breast. He carries a volume of "Burn's Justice" in his right hand, and looks the impersonation of Justice himself. The statue is marked by great excellence and appropriateness and is altogether worthy of a "public testimonial."

The Lonsdale statue (also erected by public subscription), between the Courts, is admirably placed at the southern entrance of the city, and not far from the English gates of "the olden time," through which the mediæval kings and knights of high degree had marched in fair and gorgeous pageantry. As Lord Lieutenant of Cumberland and Westmoreland for forty-two years (1802–44), William, Earl of Lonsdale, could not have been better placed in statued form. Watson clothed the Earl in the costume and insignia of a Knight of the Garter; and as an English garb, deviating materially from modern conceptions of dress, it has a striking effect. There is stability in the figure, and a lofty officialism in the Earl himself — pressing his right hand against his side, and holding a scroll in his left; and both the man and the costume are in excellent keeping.

The Aglionby and Lonsdale figures are men representatives —men as in life; not clay forms, but true portrait statues—

borrowing nothing of corporeal aid from the conventional trappings of office—civil, military, or magisterial. The drapery of the figures received the highest commendation in the London Art circles, and John Gibson, R.A. both wrote and spoke of these statues as "the finest costumed statues he ever saw" in England; and assuredly, if comparisons drawn from large experience of both metropolitan and provincial works could be safely instituted, much might be advanced in support of Mr. Gibson's frank and honourable avowal. The writer regrets that he could not obtain photographs worthy of the designs; in the Aglionby instance the light was impracticable, and other difficulties rendered the Lonsdale unsuccessful.

In addition to these statues for Cumberland, Watson executed a fine medallion of the Rev. Mr. Fletcher, Chancellor of the diocese of Carlisle, for Dalston Church. Watson was kind to the poor of Dalston, and took interest in the parish, so that on Mr. Cowen erecting an organ in the church, he wrote:—"The new organ will be a blessing. I believe a grand organ induces more heartfelt piety, and prayer, and devotion, than the discourses of half the priests. As to religious forms and sects, I, as one of the scattered sheep, care not two straws about their difference. I should just feel as pious in the synagogue, the mosque, the Catholic Church, as in Dalston Church; but I should sigh in all for an organ."

THE CHIMNEY SWEEP.

The Sweep is given as an example of Watson's successful portraiture of "Life in the Streets." No words are necessary to explain the nature of the work, as it is nature throughout. Several of the same class of models came from Watson's hands, as it was his wont to continue a series of designs; but the Chimney Sweep is the only remnant available for illustration here.

Allusion has been made, in previous pages, to the loss of so many sketches which Art would gladly have possessed to-day *in memoriam* of Watson; and he himself sustained a considerable loss of things of great value. It was either in changing his residence, or during illness or absence from home, that his plate and various specimens of *vertu* were missed. Part of the plate he recovered in some way, but all his keepsakes, manuscripts, and choice bits of art—the gathering of twenty-five years—were lost. The Roman cameos, and other gems, the prized drawings, and, perhaps, still more prizeable papers illustrative of pencil and brain-work, were gone, and for ever. In announcing this heavy loss to his sister, he concluded his note by the word—"patience."

THE CUNNINGHAM MEMORIAL.

Full of gratitude to his "best friend, Allan Cunningham," Watson solaced his feelings by executing in marble a bas-relief, emblematic of literature, to his memory. On a slab (five feet four inches by two feet eight inches) he carved a three-feet sitting figure, semi-draped, and embracing all the accessories typical of the Greek Muse — the head and face showing the best Caucasian type. In the hair, fillet, and laurel leaves, to the smallest development of the laurel flower-bud—in the facial features, and neck, and bosom, there is everywhere the most delicate finish. The Muse grasps a lyre, and occupying a position in front is a candelabrum, with scroll at its base, and surrounding its tapering form winds the stem of an ivy plant, with leaves, gracefully adding a charm of lightness to the whole symbol. Nothing can exceed the delicacy of the ivy leaves, unless it be a butterfly, with semi-expanded wings, about to light on one of them; and this is exquisitely beautiful.

The block on which the Muse seems to rest has the word "Literature" inscribed upon it, and a small winged orb * above.

* Watson was fond of Egyptian allegory, and partial to the use of the winged orb. This emblem, strictly Egyptian, and decidedly cognate with several Assyrian ones, is variously construed: by some the overshadowing

The drapery, sandalled shoes, and positions of the feet, comport with the natural attitude of a figure graceful throughout. Below the bas-relief is inscribed, "In remembrance of Allan Cunningham, the biographer of Burns, by M. L. Watson, Sculptor." The work is characterised by a vein of most exquisite poetry, while it shines with the additional lustre of being a monument of love, having its origin in the sculptor's faithful remembrance of his friend and benefactor, Allan Cunningham.

This work should find a place in some public gallery or institution, where it would be accessible to the lovers of art; and the suggestion to hand it over to the Burns Museum, in Edinburgh, seems worthy the consideration of the family of the late Mr. Cunningham.

wings are viewed in the light of protecting the globe; by others as referring to the soul's flight and immortality. The writer, if he can trust to his observations made a few years ago in Egypt, fancies that there are modifications of the directions of the lines extending from the side of the orb, in addition to the strictly winged form. In the Maya alphabet (Peru), an elliptical form or hoop, with lines curving upwards, represents the word "air"—a fact further illustrative of these emblems being widely cognate.

In sculpturing the butterfly in this bas-relief to Cunningham, Watson adduced one of the earliest forms of the Egyptian *cultus* relating to the soul. Looking to the caterpillar, the chrysalis, and the bursting into new life of the butterfly, the Egyptian saw the picture of the soul of man, and the immortality to which it aspired. The Psyche of a later age was a lovely female child, with the wings of a butterfly. The ancient god of love was associated with the spiritual after death, and of higher dignity than the modern Cupid.

THE WILKIE STATUE.

While the development of the Eldon group was daily engrossing Watson's thoughts, he took a fancy, at the eleventh hour in the race, to compete for the Wilkie statue, to be erected on the stairs of the National Gallery. In May, 1842, he writes:—"I tried my hand at a shield for Wilkie to-day. There is not much time, but, under all circumstances, I will do what I can."

On the 27th June, Haydon the painter, Dr. Darling, and Mr. Phillips visited Watson's studio, and passed their criticisms upon the Wilkie; and all condemned the palette and brush. "Haydon spoke very highly of everything else in the figure, and ridiculed that by Joseph, which he had just seen." Watson's defence of the palette and brush is conveyed in a long letter to his friend Cunningham, and the same argument, pursued verbally, seems to have overruled Haydon and his friend's objections.

"It would be absurd," wrote Watson, "to represent David Wilkie as Civil Doctor Wilkie, particularly for the National Gallery. Were the statue to be placed in Oxford, the absurdity might be forgiven. Wilkie has done more towards making Art popular than any other man, and his palette and brush were the means employed to effect his purpose. He was a great

producer of great works, an eminent master, a popular artist, and an intelligent and honest man. Knighthood and degrees were no real honours to Wilkie. In his own department Wilkie stands alone. His works interest us again and again, because of their truth, purity, and natural character. Whatever Wilkie might be at home, or behind the scenes, he is known to, and valued by, mankind as a painter; and it is therefore right to represent him as an artist, and not as a professor of Art. Raphael is known to the world as an artist. His statue fell to the lot of Flaxman, who was commissioned by Sir Thomas Lawrence to execute a statue of the Italian painter. Raphael, by Flaxman, stands with palette in hand. This work is now in the possession of Mr. Rogers the poet, a man of reputed taste, and who would not have purchased a work of art improperly treated. Here, then, is an example bearing strictly on the question at issue, and decided in favour of my idea of an appropriate statue of Wilkie by the approval of Lawrence, the genius and judgment of Flaxman, and the taste of Rogers."

It is difficult to comprehend why the palette should have been looked upon as objectionable. However, Watson's design was sent in, and came off second best. Mr. Joseph got the commission, and report, correctly or not, ascribed his success to other means than merit. Sir A. W. Calcott was in Watson's favour, and Cunningham voted for Watson's model as "by far

the best sent in;" and these high opinions were fully endorsed by the profession in general. The Wilkie is not Watson's best statue, but it has many very fine points. Like all the sculptor's works, the statuette figure is well poised, and the limbs are real limbs, such as humanity presents, which is more than can be said of Joseph's work. The face is truly Scottish, and displays all the earnestness that characterised Wilkie. In his hands are the palette and brushes. A difference of opinion might exist as to the external robe, but no one can question the drapery in general; still less the pedestal of the figure, upon which Watson modelled bas-reliefs of Wilkie's three noted pictures—"John Knox Preaching," "The Rent Day," and "The Distraint Day,"—most effectively. His notion was to make the pedestal of polished porphyritic granite, and the *bassi-rilievi* of bronze, cast by the electrotype, and let in, in the panels, as the best means of representing and securing for ages all that had been faithfully and judiciously copied from the original pictures.

Watson's want of success in the competition bore some analogy to Wilkie's first trial for the prize of the Edinburgh Academy. Wilkie's painting from "Macbeth" did not gain the premium, but it obtained more admiration and praise than the successful one. Watson's model was also second in the eyes of a Committee, but looked upon as first by his brother artists.

In the midst of "Eldons" and "Wilkies" Watson was ill

and distressed. A friend wrote him:—"I regret you have been ill, and all your difficulties. They are incidental to the great struggles for life, except when you are born to a great heritage; and, after all, a painter or a sculptor has some advantages, for you can compel the public to look at your works, though, unfortunately, you cannot educate them." No, indeed, the writer ought to have added; for how could Sir Peter Laurie, who instigated the employment of Joseph, or men of his busybody stamp, be educated to any art-judgment? It was the absence of taste, and the presence of intrigue, that destroyed Watson's chance. If the public could have had the Watsonian design placed alongside Joseph's, a correct decision would have been arrived at in a few minutes, and another confirmation would have been added to the opinion generally entertained of the wisdom of London Committees on matters of Art.

THE ST. VINCENT BAS-RELIEF.

Watson was very poorly at the time of the competition for the bas-rèliefs of the Nelson monument, and driven to the last moment. At the same time he purposed bringing out two publications: one he designated "Classical and Ideal Compositions in *rilievo;*" the other, "Compositions illustrative of Human

Life—a poem by Samuel Rogers." Of the first-named there is nothing to show beyond the Sarpedon—owing in all probability to the death of Mr. Freebairn the engraver. The "Human Life" illustrations will presently be noticed. Writing of these works to his sister—"You see how I employ my time when the day like myself is exhausted, but I am one of those who feel convinced that man can never occupy his mind too much, or have too many (legitimate) irons in the fire. Many express their surprise that I am still alive; but they do not consider that, though there is a vast difference in the strength of a large chronometer and a Geneva watch, both keep time, and are able to perform their duty."

He should have been to Portsmouth to prepare his mind for the St. Vincent bas-relief, but being tempted by a grand entertainment given by the Marquis of Northampton, he caught cold, and could not avail himself of the letters of the Secretary of the Admiralty to the naval authorities of the great seaport. Subsequently, however, Lord Clarence Paget offered to instruct Watson in "all the rags and ropes, cannon and spars." Watson alludes to his bas-relief as the only one where Nelson's arms are both on the man. "I think," he continues, "the world will be disappointed with the *rilievi*. The subjects are unfit for sculpture, or at least unfavourable. We were in the first set out most unfairly curbed. I applied personally to the Govern-

ment to show by correspondence with my Lord Lincoln (Woods and Forests) that the programme was impracticable, and the funds inadequate. In obtaining this boon I have to thank Mr. Phillips. I have held no communication with my brother artists, nor have I seen them. It is better to obtain half a loaf than no bread, and I felt certain that any demand bearing even a trait of unreasonableness would most probably ruin all. In a word, I got (for us all four) single-handed all I sought for, and more than I expected from a Government that does not devote an annual penny to art or artists. Of course I have since been covertly attacked by Mr. Railton and his friends. I anticipated this; and as to retorting on him or them after being successful, and all the governmental documents signed, I will not. I can afford to be quiet, and it is much more liberal to act with silent or gentle courtesy. . . . We will all have very many difficulties in the completion of the bronze reliefs."

The St. Vincent bas-relief was done on a small scale by Watson, and after his death Mr. Nelson had to complete the work. Watson seems to have anticipated his non-fulfilment of the commission, for writing to his sister he says, "The Nelson (Battle of St. Vincent) has fallen to my lot. I feel conscious I deserved it. It is the first commission my country has ever given me, and I hope that Providence will save my life till the completion of the work, and longer." Again he writes, "My

hair is not grey, but there is very little of it, and the inside of my head is filled with clouds and dreams of—of nothing at all. I shall be glad when my present works are cleanly swept out of my way and stuck up in their homes, but it is more than probable that I shall be first *deposed*. . . . The days are short and foggy. Oh the dissolving fogs and no daylight! I am sitting by a good fire, and write to you after reading the beautiful poem of 'Human Life,' by Rogers. It is a melody of melting words—the poetic honey of Hymettus enraptured by the sweet moral of Christianity. The author must be a good man. How thankful that I know him, and more so that I have just head and heart enough to appreciate the value of his works."

ROGERS'S "HUMAN LIFE" ILLUSTRATED.

Poesy and Art have seldom been seen in happier relations than when the words of Samuel Rogers came to be illustrated by the pencil of Musgrave Watson. Being vividly impressed with the poem on "Human Life" he based a series of cartoon drawings—fifteen in number, and in size, twelve inches by nine inches—on selected quotations from it. These drawings were too good to be lost sight of, and the friends of Watson acted wisely

after his death in publishing them, and dedicating them to Mr. Rogers, as a friend of the sculptor. Mr. William Doeg, of Carlisle, lithographed the drawings, and Messrs. Day and Sons printed them in London.

In shadowing forth rural scenery as poesy exhibits it, much is left to the fancy of the draughtsman, who finds scope in the varied flora, the range of dale, the mountain heights, and atmospheric phenomena; but human life, its passions, joys, and all its homely traits and surroundings, demand from the artist a knowledge of nature more innate—the living man in his growth, maturity, and decay. Few men were stronger than Watson in this direction; he knew human joys, and not less its trials; he was equally familiar with city and country life, and had made the study of generic man a feature in his art-education.

The subjects of these drawings are highly varied, including a large range of social and domestic life—the prison in its wretchedness lighted up by philanthropy—the homely circle with its pleasures, griefs, and bereavements. The great feature in these cartoons is the simple sculpturesque line. Watson's graphic art resembles those happy literary efforts where history is generalized, and its episodes are made intelligible by an apt quotation or pointed epigram. The anatomy of expression is finely exhibited throughout the series, and corroborative of Sir

C. Bell's theory on the subject.* If Watson had watched childhood on the mother's lap, free on lawns, or educated in drawing-rooms, or had studied senility in all its decadence, ending in death itself, he could not well have been more successful in illustrating the playful innocence, the bright feminine emotional, the calm parental, and the sere and yellow leaf of age. The artist shows his wonted power of analysis in the individualism of the figures, and not less in the accessories, the domesticity of the scenes represented constituting types of English interiors worthy of the best Flemish art. Such cartoons as Watson's would be useful for teaching purposes, in showing the power of Art to render the most varied forms of Nature, organic or inorganic, by two or three strokes of the pencil, and in drapery the value of such lessons would be still more enhanced.

It is hardly necessary to select any single cartoon † for special comment, seeing that each group bespeaks the exact limning of the artist, his graphic powers, and impressive interpre-

* The writer has often heard Sir Charles Bell speak of the value of outlined drawings in art, and how much the simple line, when expressive, indicated the genius of the artist. Watson's cartoons would have delighted this famous art-critic, and more famous physiologist and discoverer.

† Watson's illustrations of the poem of Human Life, by Samuel Rogers, are still to be found in the lists of London publications, and bring nearly the original price of a guinea in the market—a proof of their real merits and worth.

tation of nature, and his ability to present to the eye what the student of Rogers may have fancied to exist in the poet's imagination. Perhaps the following may be noted.

The family circle around an aged parent, and contributing to the old man's pleasures—

> "Now in their turn assisting to repay
> The anxious care of many and many a day;"

is a fine, affectionate group of youths of both sexes, engaged in reading and music, and surrounding the object of their love, —a beautiful lesson of filial obedience and honour, greatly to be preferred in force of character and persuasion to scriptural texts adorning the walls of a child's nursery.

The grave scene illustrating the quotation—

> "Takes a last look when, not unheard, the spade
> Scatters the earth—"

displays the grandest effects from the fewest artistic lines; indeed, some of the figures are the very perfection of outline. They appear as round as statuary, and quite as expressive as any art could render them.

> "A morning's visit to the poor man's shed,
> Who would be rich while one was wanting bread,"

reveals a door-way in Watson's happiest manner,—rustic, effective and graceful; and the poor man standing in the threshold receiving the gifts of two pretty retired girls is a picture fascinating in sentiment, making you love Art for its sweet-told tale of charity, gratitude, and joyousness of feeling.

The "Going to Church" fully realizes the words—

> "That house where age led in by filial love,
> Their looks composed, their thoughts on things above."

The entrance door of the church, the young and old folk passing in with "looks composed," the font with its "*in Christo pauperibus*," and all the accessories, are admirably treated. You see the living group in decorous motion, a band of devout Christians—"their thoughts on things above."

The last that need be noticed is a mother looking upon her two children asleep in bed:—

> "She, when all are still,
> Comes and withdraws the curtain as they lie,
> In sleep how beautiful."

The calm repose and attitudes of the two cherub forms in bed, the mother's gracefully bent form and beautiful expression, constitute a picture of human life, tenderness, and affection

that no man can look upon without sympathy, and no woman without deep feeling and emotion.

The woodcut given below is taken from one of the illustrations—Philanthropy represented by John Howard entering the prison where the manacled, the sick, and the imbecile are cast together as the dregs of humanity, deplorable to behold.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE FLAXMAN STATUE—MAN'S FIRST SACRIFICE—LUCIFER AND CAIN—WATSON'S LAST DAYS AND DEATH.

THE FLAXMAN STATUE.

WHILST basking on the green slopes of his native Cauda, Watson thought much of Flaxman's history and example, whilst in after years the works of Flaxman gave a direction to his art-studies. As it had long been a matter of regret that so little had been done to testify a nation's gratitude to the great masters in British Art, Watson, with the view of removing the stigma of neglect—fairly urged by our continental neighbours,* commenced a small model for a statue to Flaxman in 1841. This model received the approbation of Major-General Fox, who showed it to Mr. Rogers,† and Watson, knowing both their

* Canova, on his visit to England, expressed surprise and chagrin at the neglect of Flaxman in the metropolis, and contrasted the little consideration shown him with the honours which would have been paid his genius in any other capital of Europe. The words of Canova should have sunk into the heart of the nation, and stirred it to a higher recognition of the honours due to living worthies.

† Watson's letter to his sister is worth quoting on this subject:—"My Flaxman affair goes on well. All told me that I would never get Mr. Rogers

good opinions, then designed a full-sized portrait-statue. He was led to this work by a fine sense of gratitude to his early adviser, but received only faint encouragement from his brethren, who suggested a medallion in preference—mainly on the ground of Flaxman's spine not favouring portrait statue. Watson thought otherwise, and, with a full confidence in his own powers, realized a fine work.

Parties were invited to inspect the model, and such was the general approval of its worth that some of the highest in the land—poets, painters, and professional men—formed themselves into a Committee for the purpose of making the said model a permanent statue in marble. Along with noble lords, Rogers the poet, Hallam the historian, Gibson the sculptor, and Eastlake

on the Committee. I went, by invitation, to breakfast with him. The first half hour led me to think that all my efforts, and those of my friends, were unavailing. To persevere, and yet not importune, is difficult, but I determined to drive on, and never leave him until I felt like Dante—'who enters here can have no hope.' For the memory of Flaxman, his genius, and virtues, I could have wished that some one more powerful as an advocate had to plead. . . . I obtained all that could be desired, came home, and went to bed." Rogers' kindness towards Watson was frequently manifested. Thus he concludes his letter :—"The venerable poet visited me to-day. He stayed an hour, and appeared highly gratified, and said many kind words. When he entered his carriage I gave him my arm : at first he declined, and then took it, saying, 'Your hand was never made for this,—something better!' He is fading away :—

. . . . . 'age has now,
Stamped with its signal that ingenuous brow.'"

the painter, were associated, and on the 28th June, 1845, Watson was empowered, through Lord Mahon as Chairman of the Committee, and Peter Cunningham as Secretary, to commence the marbling.

The circumstance of Watson being engaged on a statue of Flaxman created an interest in the metropolitan mind as to the works of the great sculptor, and a general wish was evinced to see the casts, models, &c. of Flaxman made accessible to the public. As a "nation of shopkeepers," trusting the management of its Art concerns to the Woods and Forests department of the Executive, England had no National Gallery, strictly speaking, for the reception of Flaxman's and similar works, so that it was a matter of good luck that the Council of University College, London, consented to have the cupola of the College adapted to receive them. It ought to be stated that Flaxman died in 1826, leaving the contents of his studio to his wife's youngest sister, Miss Maria Denman, who entered warmly into the scheme for making Flaxman's works available to Art interests. After being in some measure hidden for twenty-five years, the working models and casts of upwards of one hundred of Flaxman's chief works, and his valuable drawings,* are now arranged

* The drawings of Flaxman are exhibited to perfection by an ingenious plan devised by Mr. Atkinson, the well-known and obliging Secretary to University College.

in the "Flaxman Gallery" of University College, and on the staircase leading to the gallery is the portrait statue by Watson.

Great repose marks Watson's statue of Flaxman. He is seated on a chair, with a pencil in his right hand, and a book on his left knee. The fine face and head of the sculptor are well rendered, the latter showing the man of thought, while the individual features and general expression are said to be very like Flaxman. There is a freedom throughout the work,* finely marked through the drapery. The pose of the hands, and the carving of these and the superficial veins upon them approximate the perfection of art, and the life-like character of the statue in every portion is creditable alike to the genius of the sculptor and the memory of the man sculptured.

The subscribers to the Flaxman memorial—it should have been a national one—were but few in number compared with the expectations of the promoters or the hopes of the sculptor; and though Prince Albert headed the list, the money subscribed (less than £400) fell far short of the requirements of Art; indeed

* The position of the statue on the staircase, with its cross lights, and other objectionable conditions to photography, has rendered the accompanying photograph much less satisfactory than it should have been. The statue must be seen to be fully appreciated, and the writer may say, in the words of a popular Scottish sculptor to his son (not an artist) visiting London, "If you have only time to see one statue, go and see that of Flaxman by Watson."

so inadequately were the services of Watson remunerated that his contribution not only far exceeded, but actually doubled, all the other subscriptions put together.

To Watson is due the credit of suggesting and of modelling and carving the statue, but it is greatly to be regretted that the word "finishing" cannot be added. The work was rapidly approaching completion, when early in October, 1847, Watson's anxiety to see some friends about subscriptions brought on a relapse of his illness, and drove him to bed, from which he never rose again. Like the Greeks of old, Watson sought for immortality in his works. To him high Art was a *cultus*, or worship, if you will, and he never tired of his devotions to it. On the statue of Flaxman this noble feeling buoyed him over many a day of physical fatigue and mental depression. "A Flaxman Statue by Watson," as a combination of happy historical augury, must have sounded pleasantly in the ears of Watson. It was in Art not unlike the ring, though by no means so loud, that reverberated in politics when Cromwell and Milton were associated together in founding the great Commonwealth of England. Flaxman's fame would necessarily throw a halo over the artist who was enabled to convey his features to posterity; and Watson, as sculptor of a most successful work, left an imperishable wreath upon the tomb of Flaxman—that larger tomb than the grave itself—in which his Art labours

collectively rest for the admiration of future ages. The sculptor of the shield of Achilles could have had no more worthy carver of his monument than the designer of the Sarpedon amongst Englishmen.

We could have badly spared Flaxman from the list of English worthies. Without him Art would have made but little substantial progress during the first quarter of this century. Art of a certain kind existed, and in great force, outside Flaxman's studio, but it could hardly be classified amongst the high and refining as it savoured more of purse-filling than patriotic inspiration. Busts were in vogue in the last century, and those of Garrick and Sterne made Nollekens "the fashion," whereby he gathered a large fortune, preferring money to the fame which he might have obtained by repeating works of the Mrs. Howard stamp. At a later date portrait statues filled the coffers of Chantrey; but these common-place works, though yearly increasing in quantity, and giving labour to the masonic multitudes who thronged the studios, did not elevate English sculpture in the eyes of men of taste, and could not possibly ennoble Art in its true sense; whilst as exemplars or studies they failed to display the genetic force of genius. It was far otherwise with Flaxman, who sought the classical and the ideal, and shed a halo of glory over English sculpture at a time when Thorvaldsen, with his bold conceptions, was thawing the icy regions of Art in the

north, and Canova, by his creations of form, grace, and loveliness, shone forth with Venetian splendour over the land of his birth.

Though nationally, if not perversely, slow to recognise the sons of peace and the abettors of the peaceful arts, England—whilst still waiting for a biography—has done more for Flaxman's memory than for any other sculptor, by collecting his works, and perpetuating his features in the marble. It would be more correct to say, that the credit is essentially due to Maria Denman and Musgrave Lewthwaite Watson—aided by University College. The collective labours of Flaxman placed in a gallery, with his portrait statue in the vestibule—like the master introducing himself to his own works—constitute an artistic and historical combination as happy as it is rare in England. Of Flaxman dead the words of Homer may nearly apply:—

> "His friend and pupil to his future praise
> A marble statue and great hall shall raise,
> And lasting honours to his labours give;
> His fame ('tis all the dead can have) shall live."

In the master (Flaxman) and the pupil (Watson) were to be found a great similarity of feeling, and an almost unrivalled ability as English sculptors; indeed, at no period did sculptorial Art stand higher in this country than in 1825, with Flaxman its acknowledged head; and in 1845, when the Eldon group,

Carlisle statues, and other works by Watson were presented to public notice. Watson gained the esteem of his fellow artists by his noble tribute to Flaxman's memory. He was looked to as the man for the work, and his work proved that the general voice was correct in its estimation. How Watson's heart would have rejoiced, had he lived to see his handiwork occupying the threshold of the hall containing the Art labours of his master—endorsing the idea of Chirisophus, the sculptor of the Apollo at Tegea (Arcadia), who stood in marble near his work—like the statue of a deity at the portico of the temple, indicating the worship to which it was dedicated!

Until a true National Gallery be instituted for the reception of England's masterpieces in Art, it is well that Flaxman's works should remain where they are; but it is to be hoped that the time is not far distant when the busts or portraits of the men of genius will be arranged as in a Pantheon. Flaxman should obtain a place, and Watson too, among the English worthies, when the intellectual aristocracy of England come to be classified, as they ought to be, for the benefit of the historical student—as a series of landmarks betokening the tide of human progress in the arts, sciences, and philosophy of the country.

MAN'S FIRST SACRIFICE.

In a leisure hour Watson read Lord Byron's famed drama, "Cain, a Mystery," and was so struck with the sublimity of the opening passages, that he longed to make his Art subservient to the poet's fancy; and in his endeavour to illustrate a fine episode in man's genesis, achieved a work, rivalling Byron in originality of conception, and Thorvaldsen in force of character. He modelled a bas-relief (twenty-eight inches by sixteen inches), representing Adam, Eve, Cain, Abel, Adah, with her child Enoch, and Zillah;* the existing family of man "offering a sacrifice in the land without Paradise"—time, sunrise.

Adam, the central figure, is a strikingly impressive personage; his head and frame are bent, as if about "to bow and sue for grace with suppliant knee." His arms are extended and uplifted, and the palms of the hands are open, and well disposed for giving effect to the prayerful sentiment. Like his two sons, his body is partly covered with an animal's skin, serrated at its margins, and which, in a literal sense, may be to show the

* Byron took a poetical liberty with the biblical record in assigning Adah and Zillah to Cain and Abel.

jagged flaying of the beast, or a rudimentary attempt at ornament in dress; but, viewed by the light of Art, is simply sculpturesque. The long beard and sternly fixed eye lend great earnestness to Adam's patriarchal visage, as marked by self-abnegation, as his attitude bespeaks a willing homage to a Higher Power. Adam shows the reverent feeling of a man giving utterance to the poet's words—

> "God, the Eternal! Infinite, All-wise!
> Who out of darkness on the deep didst make
> Light on the waters with a word—all hail!
> Jehovah, with returning light, all hail!"

Immediately in front of Adam, and almost prostrate on the ground, is his wife, and close to her, Adah. Eve is in full feminine proportions, and semi-nude, with her hands clasped in prayer, and her face betraying sadness and remorse. Adah veils the face of young Enoch with her hand, as if afraid of the sun's rays affecting the child's vision, or apprehensive of his being alarmed by the greater glory of an expected spiritual presence. Abel and Zillah are grouped on Adam's right, and are alike devotional with the other worshippers, who look to the eastern horizon for light, or the higher celestial benedictions, and join in the "All hail! all hail!" Cain the blasphemer is seated with his face turned away from his brethren, and

not only takes no part in the morning's devotion—having nought to ask, nor aught to thank for—but is heedless, morose, and sullen. A lion is crouched at his feet, and apparently under his subjection. In introducing the lion, the artist, probably, wished to recall that passage in Cain's conversation with Lucifer regarding death, in which Cain inquires as to the nature of this mysterious agency—life's fell destroyer:—

> "Could I wrestle with him?
> I wrestled with the lion when a boy,
> In play, till he ran roaring from my gripe."

Watson's work is full of character and impressiveness—possibly a little strong in line, and Thorvaldsen-like, but in good keeping with, if not conferring power upon, the description of the poet in setting forth the sacrificial orisons of man—not a Jewish or bloody offering, but one of heart and soul in earnestness and in truth. Looking to the abrupt termination of the ground, like an overhanging precipice, in front of Eve, the sculptor apparently sought, in the rocky eminence, and in the absence of tree, and herb, and living thing, and all other accessories, natural or domestic, to invest the scene without Paradise with wildness, sterility, and solitude, so as to enable him to give the fullest force to the humanity group, and to produce

nature in its severe simplicity, reflecting the primitive man in his solemn worship of the Deity.

Looking to Adam's person and limbs, and not less those of Cain's—affording opportunity for the display of muscular interlacings and tense sinew—and contrasting these with the less demonstrative anatomy of the other figures, Watson seems as much at home with the motory action of life as with its state of repose. In designing the "First Sacrifice," the sculptor's art had risen with the subject—biblical, quasi-historical, or dramatic, if you will—undoubtedly poetic, inspiring, and sublime; and realized a work of grand feeling, as typical of Byron's conceptions and illustrative of Milton's words, in describing the offspring of fallen man as they are to our first parents when they

> "Prostrate fell,
> Before Him reverent, and both confessed
> Humbly their faults, and pardon begged; with tears
> Watering the ground, and with their sighs the air
> Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign
> Of sorrow unfeigned, and humiliation meek."

LUCIFER AND CAIN.

The first scene of the second act of the same Byronic drama furnished Watson with his "Lucifer and Cain in the Abyss of Space," a subject by no means facile of demonstration by pictorial art, but one of much higher daring in sculpture, especially as the artist confined himself solely to the text of the poet in one of his grandest soarings.

Lucifer, speaking artistically and always deferentially of his Satanic Majesty, has been presented to the world in every conceivable shape that natural history from its fossil geological past, or its present fertile life, could furnish; that mythology with its Typhonic creations could advance; or that theology, mediæval or modern, with its glut for "quenchless flames" to the lasting edification of sinners, could fabricate: — the only essentials apparently kept in view by the limner of the "bad spirit" being ugliness and hideousness of form. Watson took no such grovelling view of an Entity—credited as that Entity had been with a rival jurisdiction in the celestial government, and with powers to show the kingdoms of the earth to, and to seek submission from, the Jewish representative of the Godhead; nor could he see how Lucifer without a most pleasing exterior would

be able to allure the sons of men, or without the voice of the charmer divert from a virtuous path the fair daughters of Eve. The sculptor would be consistent, and therefore eschewed all the ordinary species and Protean varieties of the generic Devil; *ex. gr.* the creeping reptilé, the vampyrean mammal, and that horrid conception of Salvator Rosa's in his "Temptation of St. Anthony;" and other hoofed and horned, tailed or tailless, winged or wingless brutes. He neither figured Lucifer as "Dis," driving furious steeds through a Christian Pandemonium, nor did he adopt the terrestrial curiosity of the English, the fiery dragon crushed long ago by our chivalrous St. George; or the roaring lion with the cloven hoof, an alliance of the fierce *carnivora* with the mildest *ruminantia*, that neither Cuvier* nor Geoffroy St. Hilaire could possibly classify under any biological arrangement, much less believe in, any more than the Zulu, with Bishop Colenso as teacher, could credit that two and two make five, though scriptural citation was offered on behalf of the statement. The sculptor followed none of these exemplars, whether drawn from Northern myths, barbaric super-

* Cuvier, being interrogated as to the cloven foot upon the devouring animal, shook his head at the extraordinary conjunction of the grass and cud-chewing, domesticated bovine, with the flesh-tearing, blood-thirsty, wild denizens of the forest; and said that the theologians of the day were clumsy abricators of *their* devil.

stitions, or the pages of a priestly demonology, that could only be reconciled with the lowest fetishism of the lowest humanity, but one step removed from the troglodytes, or pre-historic man. Watson viewed, as Milton had done, the representatives of demonocracy as—

> "God-like shapes and forms
> Excelling human; princely dignities:"

and Lucifer, "their great commander," as a spirit of power rather than a "goblin damned;" to be drawn in shape and gesture proudly eminent; and this could only be attained by giving the highest excellence to the human form—the type of generic perfection in the world—and investing that form with a Miltonic halo, the divinely approximative in Art.

He aimed to show in his bas-relief Lucifer and Cain traversing space, as set forth by Byron:—

> "CAIN. I tread on air, and sink not; yet I fear
> To sink.
> LUCIFER. Have faith in me, and thou shalt be
> Borne on the air, of which I am the prince."

Now Cain's upright position, with one leg pointing directly downwards, the other semiflexed, with both arms fully extended, and in opposite directions, give a poise to the "tread on air;"

whilst his countenance seems expressive of another passage, in which he is made to say—

> "Oh! thou beautiful
> And unimaginable ether!
> . . . . .
> Through an aërial universe of endless
> Expansion—at which my soul aches to think—
> Intoxicated with eternity."

The sculptor has succeeded—the most difficult part of his task,—in giving to Lucifer's figure a sustaining power of Cain in his passage through the ether;—the floating, the motory, and the propulsive characters being finely portrayed. Lucifer's right arm points to the earth, and around this arm, as also his body, winds a snake, with its jaws slightly apart; and, whether hissing or not, of unquestionable meaning in Art. His left arm holds up, and in the most significant manner—

> " . . . his ponderous shield
> Ethereal temper, massy, large, and round,
> Behind him cast;"

and a spirit of defiance and triumph characterises his mien throughout. The only deviation from the entire nude is a slight flowing drapery surrounding Cain's right arm, and extending backwards. The figures float along in Sarpedon fashion, and the

mind of the observer is led to fancy the orb below engaging the attention and discourse of the tempter and the tempted.

It would be difficult to find a truer embodiment of the noble human type than that presented by Cain,—a Spartan *physique* with the Spartan spirit that would wrestle with a lion. Both figures, indeed, seem to have been cast in the mould of the perfect in Art, the corporeal entities in handsome form as alive in expression as indicative of aërial transit. Lucifer is proud and exultant Cain is wondering and intoxicated with new life. Each feature is graphically rendered, and the composition is thoroughly Flaxmanic in character.

Of a colossal bust of the Duke of Wellington, done in marble for Colonel Gurwood, and a large cenotaph of Cornish granite to Admiral Sir Thomas Williams, in Kensal Green Cemetery, and numerous works for Lord Cadogan and others, the writer does not feel it incumbent to dwell upon—holding, as he does, that the works before the reader, described or photographed, are sufficiently typical of the manner of the sculptor, and not less characteristic of the feelings of the man, Watson.

WATSON'S LAST DAYS AND DEATH.

From youth upwards Watson showed great delicacy of health, and, like his mother, possessed the acute sensitiveness so frequently met with in highly nervous folk. The amount of food he took, seldom including meat, was but a modicum of what was necessary for the proper sustenance of his frame. Mr. Cunningham, when he knew that Watson would be coming, used to say,—"Get the dinner out of the way, as Watson hates the smell of meat, and never takes any." How life, active, and essentially operative, was kept up in him, is a physiological problem; for, though he had only a small frame to renovate, he had a large brain to sustain, and that brain was constantly wearing out its energies. If inattentive to the ordinary mode of living when means and comfort were at hand, and the world's cares had obtained no footing, it may be inferred that these fastings and irregularities got larger hold of the man under less favourable circumstances. His day's work alongside Mr. Woodington (p. 54) was but a type of a thousand others.

Acting on the principle that extremes meet, he had occasional bursts of indulgence, as a compensating balance to his system, so

often in a state of half inanition. He would fast for days, then feast for hours; to-day an anchorite living on dry crusts and simple water, when he should have had warm food and wholesome wine; to-morrow, aldermanic in rich soups and brandy punch, when quiet and a sedative would have fitted him better. He had more Lents than Carnivals, and his Lenten seasons rivalled in severity the practices of the mediæval Church. His Carnivals were fitful, if not compulsory, arising out of long neglect of himself, his fasts creating indigestion and pain, which brandy relieved or banished. To the sufferer from pangs such as Watson endured, any soothing agent, poisonous or non-poisonous, would gladly be clutched for relief. De Quincey's hunger-pains in the streets of London, and the dose of laudanum got at the druggist's—the agony before, the heaven after the opium—reveals a parallel case to Watson's seeking brandy to ward off the devilish feeling that racked his body, and became reflected in a depressed, if not at times haunted, imagination. The sculptor Watson and the scholar De Quincey had some points in common, but the analogy was far from general, seeing that the use of brandy with the one was a temporary agent for pressing wants; whilst opium gave an almost daily colouring to De Quincey's mind and speech, making him not only *the* De Quincey of his family, but almost a speciality in his race—the opium eater, the opium oracle, and the opium philosopher.

The following letter will give the reader a notion of Watson's sufferings, anxieties, and work, about the time that he was engaged with the Lonsdale statue:—

"As to myself and my works, I can only say that both or all are utterly contemptible. The labour I go through is beyond all that I should wish any friend to suffer. I do suffer, and deeply too. It is impossible for me to say what I feel. Fourteen hours a day are not enough. No one can aid me, at least no one does. The letters, the work, the conversation, the anxiety, the excitement, the debility, the broken spirit, my own sorrows, will, I am sure, cut me down. It is true that I have some courage, but this has been brought into action too late, namely, when the constitution is broken. Yet still I will do all I can. It is manly to fight like a Trojan, and die like a Spartan Leonidas. With all I never lose Hope. I think I married her when very young, and I may say that she has been the partner-spirit of my life, and of my existence. I often wish that the mind could be rendered less active, and then I must be necessarily more quiet. I have written hastily."

The hasty writing is visible enough, yet the letter is highly expressive and characteristic of the man. During the writing, he was frequently interrupted by visitors, and amongst others, the widow of the famous Mr. Huskisson, accompanied by Mr. Gibson, the sculptor, from Rome, whose presence would be

a welcome sight to Watson, as he appreciated Gibson's criticism :—a criticism, by the way, always favourable to him, if not highly laudatory. Like all men of true ambition, Watson liked his works to be understood; but nothing disgusted him so much as puffery and indiscriminate praise.

As years rolled on, Watson got worse in health, but he seemed to bear up against its ills during the art-inspiring hours of labour; the mental concentration of the man overcoming his bodily languor in a marvellous way. This could not go on for ever; his nerves became unstrung; he got sick and faint, and went to bed exhausted. He was under the kind care of Mr. Hilton for a time, and got well; then he purposed going to the Holy Land, but this was not carried out. Everybody was aware of his bad health, but few knew the extent of his sufferings, how little he ate, how restless his days, and how sleepless his nights. Though worried by anxiety, he kept alive, and aye ready for work. If the *laborare est orare* ever had a significance since the saint's proclamation of the dictum, Watson could lay claim to all the virtues that labour could possibly bring in its train. He was like Blake in work. Blake went steadily on in health or sickness. Once a young artist complained of being very ill,—"What was he to do?" "Oh," said Blake, "I never stop for anything; I work on whether ill or not."

Watson wrote to a medical friend:—"I have been ill for two years—nay, I may say six or seven; but I am now quite broken up and shattered. I work hard, and intend to do so to the last. The mind will not be quiet without some occupation. The arterial system and the nervous system are at daggers drawn, and there is a continued beating and throbbing —no interregnum. This is enough for you; you will know that I am now a cracked pot, never to be repaired." With all this feeling of prostration, he was content to live upon cups of coffee at stated intervals, with bits of bread and butter. In the last year of his life he was described as a "frail little creature—a great genius tabernacled in a nut-shell of a body." Watson's nervous temperament naturally enhanced all his feelings for good or evil. After attaining his "forties," the years of suffering he had passed through told more heavily. His heart, always weak, had to battle with the hard laws of impoverished blood, and the harder laws of being driven by an impetuous nervous force streaming downwards from an over-excited brain. He was always working at high pressure, and, as he used to say, "I work by steam—ten minutes may stop the machine."

In 1847, Watson fairly broke down, and sought the country for quiet and fresh air. In two months he returned to London to finish the Eldon group, and to extend the area of the Flaxman Committee, and to complete the statue. This longing

to infuse into others the spirit which actuated himself in upholding the memory of Flaxman, and meeting with public apathy and indifference, played no small part in breaking the slender fibres that bound him to life. It was a weariness of soul to Watson to see English Art going a-begging when Flaxman's name was the Art-cry; for in his latter days honour to Flaxman was the be-all, as the statue to Flaxman was the end-all, of his existence. Early in October, he went out on this very business, came home, and, as he truly said, "completely done for." The consumptive cough and signs increased, and Dr. Addison,* Senior Physician of Guy's Hospital, was called in. Watson now felt that the days of work were past, so had all his models brought into his sick room — not merely to take a last farewell of them, but as a final review of their worth and fitness to live as memorials of their master. As each model was held up for inspection, he passed sentence on his old friends and companions of better days—with, however, little mercy, and leaving them no appeal. All seemed guilty,

* When Dr. Thomas Addison stood by the bedside of Watson, two of the greatest representative men of the day were face to face—the one so noble a physician, and by far the best man in the diagnosis of disease of his time and century;—the other of the Flaxmanic type of English sculptors, and perhaps the only one. Both men were of Cumberland origin, and sons of yeomen—the one nurtured on the high banks of the Irthing, the other in the sequestered vale of the Cauda.

more or less, of imperfection in the master's eyes; and "destroy," or "be done with," constituted the general verdicts passed by the stern judge on his own creations. A word was said in favour of a beautiful model by one of his assistants, who wished much to possess it. "What!" said Watson, "do you want my works carried upon the heads of alabaster men after my death—hawked about the streets of London as images? No, that shan't be;" and the fine model shared the general iconoclastic fate. It grieved the hearts of Watson's men to destroy works which they would so gladly have kept, both for their intrinsic worth, and as a memento of Watson. Many of these models were of able design. There were the laboured thought and the work of years — the classical ideal, the rough cast, the finished form in all its beauty, the satirical and the grotesque, busts, natural history sketches, and these both rudimentary and complete, from the ivy leaf to the expressive features of the human form divine—nearly all doomed, in a few hours, to heaps of fragments. The determination to leave no trace of blemish on the Watsonian art-shield gave rampancy to his iconoclastic feeling, and the morning's sacrifice —rash and ruthless in all verity—reduced the building of years to dust and *débris*.

As he had built up with vigour so did he destroy. He had reviewed his art-life in the works around him, and it was now

done with and for ever. Still his memory clung to Flaxman, and in conveying his last words to the sister he so dearly loved, he wrote three lines on a scrap of paper—the conspicuous words in those three lines being—"The Statue!" Now "the statue" meant was that to Flaxman—the crowning piece and finish of his own labours, by which he anticipated that his humble name would go down the stream of time along with his illustrious master. Like Buckle, the historian and philosopher, who having but one thought in parting from the world, that he was to die and leave his work unfinished, cried out in his last hours at Damascus—"Oh my book, my book!"—the final utterances of a soul devoted to a grand object, whereby he hoped to record a line on the page of history that posterity would be able to recognise as a line—true, prophetic, and lasting.

Watson died on the 28th October, 1847, at the age of forty-three years and nine months, and was buried in Highgate Cemetery in the most private manner—his remains being followed by his worthy brother-in-law, the Rev. R. Jackson, Messrs. Woodington and Nelson, sculptors, Mr. P. Cunningham, and Surgeon Franks. A tombstone marks his last resting-place.

On the 14th September, 1848, Watson's professional materials and effects were sold at his studio in Bidborough Street, New Road. Several models or sketches came to light, of which the sculptor had made no use, and others were kept back for reasons

best known to the administrator. Disappointment was expressed by the artist world at the paucity of the remains of poor Watson's studio, even by those who had heard of his sad demolition of works in his last days. Watson had bequeathed all his bronzes to his friend, Sir Charles Eastlake.

The transept of the Carlisle Cathedral contains a medallion of Watson from the chisel of George Nelson, and erected by a few admiring friends. Above the medallion the words—"Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate;" and beneath the record of his birth and death, the following inscription:—"The elegance, simplicity, and purity of his works are sufficient to impress all that by his death Art has lost one of her most gifted exponents."

Something more than this provincial acknowledgment is needful, and London, the theatre of Watson's labours, should possess a suitable memorial of him. As Mr. Nelson took casts of Watson's head after death there are materials in his hands for a good portrait bust. If the National Gallery be worthy of its name, a niche or pedestal should be found for the sculptor of the Sarpedon, and the closer the position to Flaxman, the more historically correct and appropriate the honour. The sculptors of Britain, for the honour of their profession, will be expected to take this matter into consideration. As they adduced Watson's instance in their remonstrance against the

system of public competition (to be noted in the following chapter), it is to be hoped they will not overlook his great claims to a suitable *in memoriam*. The writer of these pages will gladly give £10 as a contribution to a portrait bust, if such bust can be made historically available in London.

The contemporaries of Watson spoke highly of his abilities. Allan Cunningham said that he was the most poetical sculptor of the day, and showed the most refined taste; further adding that he was the most tractable of men, easy to deal with, and ever ready to co-operate kindly in work. It has often been said that Watson died when bursting into fame, and that had he been spared five or ten years longer, he would have been the man of his times, and unquestionably given a tone to English Art. These, and similarly flattering opinions, are entertained and freely expressed by London sculptors; and to the writer of these pages it has been gratifying to hear the liberal and generous homage paid Watson's merits by the guild of artists. All the literary periodicals, *Athenæum*, *Art Journal*, and others, noticed, however briefly, poor Watson's death, and the valuable works he had done. The Editors of the *Illustrated Exhibitor* of the Great Exhibition of 1851 characterized the Eldon group as admirable, and made the following remarks on Watson himself:—"Alas for the fame of the gifted! Mr. Watson lived long enough to achieve, but not to enjoy, fame.

It is the old story over again; genius lives in obscurity and dies in poverty, and then all at once the world wakes up to the knowledge that a great spirit has gone from out its portals. Quite grieved and beside itself, the world of wealth wrings its hands in impotent regrets, and raises a monument to the memory of the genius which a little encouragement and a little sympathy would have kept alive."

CHAPTER XIV.

SUMMARY.

IN conversing with those who knew Watson intimately the writer has frequently elicited the remark,—"Ah, Sir! he was a lost man—what he might have been if encouraged;" and in reference to this biography—"Had Watson lived five or ten years longer you would have had plenty of materials to work upon;" and words of similar import, showing the high estimation in which he was held by sculptors of his own time. One who lived in the closest relation with Watson said to the writer —"No one like Watson—a fair start and good health, and he would have left a great name in the history of Art." Another sculptor of the highest repute to-day expressed the following opinion:—"Watson was cut off in his prime, hardly known to the public, but well known to sculptors as the man of his day —a true genius. He should have been more appreciated, as he was capable of anything in his art. He gave in the best designs for a number of public works, statues, &c. contemplated

in his time, and never got a commission he so well merited. Truly lost!"

The word lost is sad to quote, but it is the only term applicable to the man, and to his position among his brethren; nor was he less lost to the community whose patronage, if better bestowed, would have secured in him one of the ablest representatives of English sculpture. Watson clung to independence and isolation rather than conform with the usual practice of young sculptors; he also stood aloof from Art-coteries—a form of heresy little tolerated amongst the élite and academical, who, in the style of feudal lords, wish for hosts of retainers:—hence he was in some degree lost to the guild of artists. Watson's heterodoxy would have fared better on the Continent; there he would have been judged of on his own merits, and by his writings on the wall of Art, and acknowledged ten years sooner than he was at home; but England, in art as in religion, if not orthodox is nothing, and its orthodoxy helped to crush the most rising sculptor of the day.

Looking to the stamp which Watson impressed upon his work—so different in character from that of the ordinary rank and file in the studios—it is easy to understand why he refused to follow the groove of mediocrity, and labour for others, for little pay and less acknowledgment. The remarks made to the students of the Museum of Economic Geology by Mr.

Beresford Hope, in the spring of this year, may be cited for their applicability to Watson:—"It was desired that the honour of producing fine works of Art should be with those who made them, and not, with the profit also, given to the employers only." How galling it must have been to Watson to see work after work of his own sent into the world with all the credit of the design attached to other names than his. To him who loved fame more than gold—to him who could dine off a penny roll and a cup of coffee, and whose physical wants claimed no consideration—to him whose nationality was of the Spartan order, and whose art was his idol — could anything be more depressing than to see English Art-patronage centred upon Chantrey, Behnes, and the class below them?

Watson's "Jolly Friars" were a pleasant notoriety, and if he had produced no other work (he had done better and more graceful art), should have gained him the reputation of being a modeller; for who but himself could have done this matchless group? Yet the Friars only obtained for him an engagement with Behnes. Had Watson been less self-willed, or a little more subservient to those occupying the high places in the synagogue, he would, probably, have been the sculptor of the Royal Exchange and of the Wilkie statue. Standing too much aloof from his guild or brethren, he was not looked upon as a safe man by old fogyism, as he would persist in calling a spade

by its right name, and fancied he saw too many spades in the pack of Art-professors and Art-committees—notably visible in the City Frieze and in other competitions. Recognising very fully the faults of his humanity, Watson suffered more from unfair rivals, Fine Arts Commissions, and arbiters of the select vestry class (nor can the Royal Academy of that day be held exempt), than he did from his own personal indiscretions. He was ignored by Chantrey because he boldly claimed fair recompense for his labours; he was slighted by the Government and other corporate bodies because he had no *locus standi* in the dining circles and hangers-on of Providence in London: and he was in no wise encouraged by the Royal Academy. Surely the sculptor of the Eldon group had earned his spurs to an Associateship, and the fact of his seeking to do honour to Flaxman in a true Flaxmanic spirit should have placed him on the first step of the ladder to academical honours. It could hardly be argued, in Watson's time, that the Academy rested its claims upon merit alone, or that it sought to foster talent and originality, when the sculptor of the Sarpedon, the Friars, the City Frieze, the Eldon group, and the Flaxman statue, received no recognition at its hands. It may safely be asked, Was there any man on the roll of the Academy who could have produced five works equal, in every respect, to these, as classical and modern instances in Art?

Watson's sculpture has a character of its own—specially seen in the works which came from his chisel when he was approaching his zenith—stamped with an originality and clear meaning in Art. A harmony of relation pervades all his compositions, hence the pleasure and repose they afford the observer. There is neither prominent feature, nor undue detail, but an equanimity in the association of Art with Nature, that gives breadth of feeling to his works. He borrowed but little from the accessories of Art, and meretricious ornament, or anything of the *ad captandum vulgus* character, found no place in his studio. He was faithful to Flaxman and antipodal to Roubilliac in this respect. All, or nearly all, was told by Watson that Art could tell by line, or that nature and æsthetic refinement could suggest; yet nothing was told too strongly or abruptly. His works, when the strictly academical or historical were aimed at, bore the culture of scholarship, and the grace and the dignity of Art. Even in those instances where anatomy was in part requisite, he kept it in abeyance like a true sculptor—hiding the framework of the body and muscular swellings, in which Michael Angelo, and others less worthy, yet wishing to be more imitative, indulged.

Watson's medical associations were perhaps the strongest, so that he had better opportunities of acquiring a general knowlege of anatomy and physiology than fell to most young

men outside the professional walk. The Greeks did not dissect the human body, and knew little of what was under the skin, but then they had the living model of the most perfect kind to study from. Watson's Art anatomy was like nature in health, never obtrusive or in strong display, but easy, graceful, and flowing in line. He observed form and action with a keen eye—overlooking nothing, and apparently forgetting nothing. His early acquaintance with the Elgin Marbles gave him a good start in this direction, and, like the riders in the frieze of the Parthenon, his Art designs showed the comely action, the lissom step, and with these the rounded surface of nature herself. He knew that it was only in very strained muscular efforts that sinewed lines could possibly be requisite in sculpture, and here, as in other walks of his art, he showed correct and judicious taste. Watson possessed a feeling for *generic* Art, along with a successful cultivation of its *individuality*; as he could particularize the smallest details, so could he group numbers of figures with pleasing harmony;—well seen in the Cunningham Memorial and in his compositions of the Cameron and First Sacrifice. There was nothing flimsy and nothing shadowy in his works, but everywhere a force and a meaning —natural, free, and not seldom poetical and classical.

Like a true student and true follower of Art, Watson sought the advancement and perfection of his calling. His ambition

soared above a mediocre *status*, or any subserviency to the canons of Art as laid down by English writers, and the would-be connoisseurs and lay critics of his generation. How much this feeling possessed him is well set forth in the following words to his sister:—"In all things I am successful as an artist. It has rarely fallen to the lot of any man to run more rapidly. In five years I have accomplished more, single-handed, than might satisfy a life in less ambitious men than myself. It is still my aim and end to be first or nothing. It is my wish to show, though most delicate in frame, sunk in ill-health, and shattered by anxiety and labour, that unwearied assiduity will attain its own reward. To attain eminence in the arts is difficult to all, nor can any distinguish himself when *no* opportunity is given; but the greatest ability can attain comparatively little without industry."

He showed a marvellous rapidity as well as constancy in work, of which the Hebe done in one day and the sixteen hours' labour apportioned between Chantrey and Westmacott are good proofs. He was as enthusiastic in Art as a religious devotee to an old fetishism, or a fresh convert to a new fanaticism. Absorbed in work, he forgot the claims of humanity and all its organic requirements. Of his rapidity in drawing it has been told that on one occasion for a wager, and possibly when in high feather, he drew seven heads in a minute, and all speci-

fically different and all expressive of character—no feature in the physiognomy of each face but what was fairly exhibited.

Watson was full of anecdote and fun, and hearty in company if he had confidence in the party; and his conversation was highly intellectual, and not seldom impressive, as it could also be sarcastic. He was fond of disputation, and not easily overcome in argument; and, when roused by contradiction, could hit his antagonist as hard in words as he could his enemy at a distance by the sting of his pen. Give him a patient listener, and Watson would talk for hours on the philosophy of Art—the glories of its past history, its struggles, its decadence; and reason not less correctly on the groundwork of its revivalism. In this kind of talk he soared too high for his brethren, many of whom looked upon Art-philosophy as dreamy, and national feeling as worth cultivating only for the sake of its Art-guineas.

Being partial to poetical and classical literature—and his knowledge of both was considerable—his mind had a tendency to wrap up all the information he obtained from reading and study in artistic forms and compositions. Homer filled him with heroic conceptions, and Rogers's "Human Life" gave rise to his beautiful illustrations of English domesticity. Watson had no patience with common-place work, but, if he undertook it at all, he must see it well done. The perfect in Art was his joy and his fealty, the imperfect he ostracized most unsparingly. Pos-

sessing a large share of ambition—and without it he never would have struggled through the many difficulties besetting his path—he wished for honours and distinction rather than money aggrandizement. Thus, when he had the Eldon group and Aglionby statue, and lots of commissions on hand, he longed for something more than the conventional "pot-boilers"—"I am full of work," he wrote, "but not of the most classical kind." Perhaps he sought too high an ideal—unquestionably so, in relation to his own work, which seldom, if ever, came up to his mark. Writing in 1844 to his sister, and in allusion to a lady's marriage, he conveyed this dissatisfaction very aptly:—"I could not feel in heart to marry anybody, because I am sure I should not suit the party long. I cannot agree with my mistress—my art; we quarrel all day, and agree only when I am sound asleep. The jade is vain of her beauty, and I cannot do anything well enough to please her, so we fight."

He was the reverse of an ill-natured critic, and always disposed to do justice to both friend and foe alike; then his criticisms were so apt and true—being guided by good taste and ample knowledge of his subject. His letters show great generosity and kind feeling to rival sculptors; and the views he expressed on some artists of his time have been endorsed and strengthened during the last few years. He was not so generous to his own works, as the following instance will prove: In

the last year of his life, a friend and distant relative solicited a medallion of Watson himself, which request was at once acceded to. On the gentleman calling at the studio some time afterwards, Watson brought out the medallion, and showed it to his assistant, and asked if he knew for whom it was intended. "Yes, Sir, for yourself, and a good likeness it is." Watson replied, "It may be, but it has a fault, and I never allow anything to go out of my hands with a fault capable of being corrected," and he immediately threw it on the floor. Watson may have appeared rash and impetuous, but his actions were consistent with his thoughts that nothing in sculpture should be viewed as excellent unless pre-eminently so. He was well aware that perfection was unattainable in Art, but there was a salient meaning in sculpture that must be educed, and if possible without a flaw; and this amount of perfection he sought after through life,—becoming in his maturer years more and more fastidious about its full realization.

In Watson's time there was but little encouragement to sculpture beyond busts, monumental designs, and, but more rarely, groups of figures; still less interest was shown in the usage of the art to architectural embellishments; whilst all this time the British Museum, around which both sculptors and architects were located, contained portions of the grand frieze of the Parthenon, and modelled imitations of the great Temple itself.

The bas-relief in Threadneedle Street showed that a mind like Watson's, if fairly developed, would have brought to light some guiding principle in furtherance of architectonic sculpture, and its application to the buildings of modern London. Watson's demise was the more to be regretted that no one in his time seemed able to approximate a generalization in Art, or to follow the course he had specially indicated. English architecture would appear to be in a transitional state; anyhow, it is not rich in expression, and much less rich in Art feeling; and might therefore be glad of a closer alliance with sculpture or painting. Should a *renaissance* in this direction arise—and it is much needed, —English architecture may more reasonably claim a higher position in the arts. Then the English mind of each age reflected in its grander masonic creations will be more readily understood by the future historian of England's life, or the more distant explorer of England's ruins. And should "Time's scythe and tyrants' rods" lower Britannia's flag below the horizon of nations, it is to be hoped that the dilapidated palaces, the crumbling monuments, and edificial fragments—vestiges of noble thoughts and nobler epochs—may bespeak for fallen England what has been claimed by an English poet for fallen Rome:—

"Heroes have trod this spot—'tis on their dust ye tread."

There was a dash and vigour in Watson rarely met with, so that when he challenged Behnes and the other rivals in the

City Frieze competition to four hours' trial in clay-modelling, he knew his own powers, and had a full comprehension of the measure of his opponents'. Watson worked with fewer tools, and with more simple mechanical aids to his art than any man in England; and if his hands showed something of the cunning of the ancient masters, his brain manifested no little superiority over his contemporaries. Chantrey, and others who figured after Flaxman, never rose to Flaxman's height, but Watson seemed to approach the regenerator of English sculpture both in originality and classical tendency; and would in time have rivalled his fame. There is no wish to disparage the merits of others, or to extol Watson beyond his fair claims, in saying that those whom Watson was obliged to serve were his paymasters, but not his superiors in work after 1836. Each had his own walk in Art. Chantrey did the large and mechanical, the prosaic and orthodox,* forms which satisfied the British public, and brought money to his coffers in greater heaps than to any man since the days of Nollekens. Baily excelled in the delineation of graceful lines, and in the selection of pleasing and captivating subjects. Behnes was good at busts, but no modeller, and in statues of large size seemed

* Holland, Chantrey's biographer, says of Chantrey's full-sized statues, "I do not recollect one that is without the conventional wrapper; it is in at least a dozen instances supported by the hand of the figure," &c. The statues of George the Fourth and Pitt in Edinburgh used to be praised because they were Chantrey's productions;—happily a better taste prevails now.

entirely lost; whilst Westmacott was characterized as the author of "pretty sculpture," called "classicality;" but none of these well-known men possessed the same general powers as Watson, nor could they shine with him in all the walks of Art. In design or composition, in modelling, and in rapidity of work he had no rival during the last few years of his life; whilst in classical conception, as well as in the colossal figure, Watson left his brethren far behind. In no department of sculpture did he so closely approximate Flaxman as in the classical. He even ventured on the same ground—the Homeric, and proved by his Sarpedon that he was no unworthy follower of him whose last and noblest work was the Achilles Shield.

Some men dwell in the aërial and theoretical regions of Art, and are little more than talkers or button-holders, but with Watson there was no dilettanteism, and no vain imaginings. He could execute what his classical mind suggested. As he abjured the prosaic, so he revelled in the lofty ideal of Art. Vain regrets now that a man of such powers should have spent years in waiting for patronage, and in seeking to obtain commissions already bestowed on the favourite of a minister, or got through the connivance of a busy functionary in a corporation or academical clique. In his thirtieth year he had shown a zealous cultivation of high Art, but he was nearly forty years of age before the world gave him the chance of demonstrating his powers. He had no

rich patrons, and no political friends; and no Art-critic bestowed a word either upon him or his works during the first thirteen years of his struggle for fame and existence. When told of *Fraser's Magazine* saying a good word for him, he wrote, "Lord bless the critic; abuse is far best for me. Notoriety in life brings bread, and fame follows after death if your words or works deserve it." Such a mind as Watson's, fairly treated and placed at ease by timely recognition, would have won honours for itself, and conferred fame and reputation on the land of his birth.

Writing to his sister on other subjects, he mentions incidentally a competition for a London monument in which he is not at all concerned; but hopes it may be given to "Gibson of Rome who deserves well of his country, and yet has never received a public commission." He might have added his own name to Gibson's, previous to his getting the St. Vincent. Watson's experience of commissions was painful and deplorable, and it was no wonder that he came to look upon all competitions as shuffling and jobbery. Ignorance in part, intrigue in larger part, and a moral Pecksniffianism everywhere, seemed to rule cabinets, Fine Arts Commissions, and Guildhall coteries in Watson's time; so that he upon whom the best part of Flaxman's mantle had fallen, was thrown into the shade by second and third-class men. Competition for Art prizes at length became so much a sham, that the principal sculptors of Britain in 1856 addressed a

remonstrance to the Government, through Sir B. Hall. They said, *inter alia* :—

"What is lamentably true is this—that means have rarely been adopted for committing public works to the men of greatest merit amongst us. . . . None can feel more deeply than ourselves the degradation which the sculpture of England has suffered during the last fifty years from the erection in our metropolitan Cathedral, the Abbey, and Guildhall, of the huge puerilities and distressing allegories which deface the walls of these buildings. But let it be borne in mind, that while large sums were being lavished upon such productions as these, Flaxman and Banks were alive, needy, and seeking employment. Men who were neglected year after year by the Government and the municipal authorities of that time, are now the boast of every Englishman, and acknowledged to have earned an European reputation. . . .

"To approach somewhat nearer to our own times, we would point to a fact of no little significance. A sculptor of the name of Watson recently died; he was an industrious artist, and a competitor for most of the public monuments erected in his day. He never obtained a commission, but the rejected models which he exhibited on such occasions are now sought for with great avidity, and studied by living artists."

Aiming at the inspiriting and glorious in Art, Watson was ever and anon met by the dire necessities of a flesh-and-blood

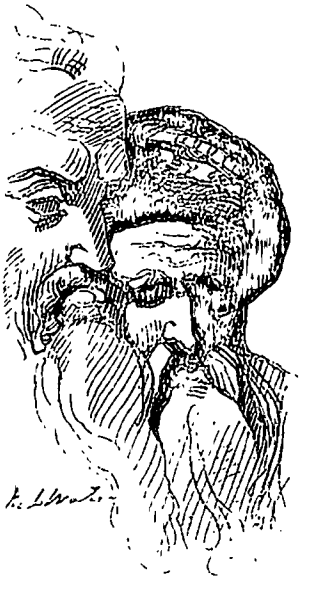
existence. The fancied design was only a vision of the brain till the hands could fulfil the promise and raise the structure; and this could only be done by time, patience, and money. He wished to aid in the principles of English Art, to see more of the native element and less of the continental; he was equally anxious to see the mind of the country indoctrinated with a love of Art for its own sake as a pleasant occupation and study. Influenced by the tone of Athenian Art, its rise and grandeur based on a love of the perfect in form, and made consonant with the godlike aspirations of the people, he gave free currency to his thoughts, and refreshed sympathetic minds with his disquisitions on the general history of Sculpture.

Gifted with large natural abilities, a fair amount of scholarship, and no small knowledge of men, and not less gifted with a perceptive discrimination and diplomacy, Watson might have shone in other walks of life than Art. Had he kept by the law, he would have played a successful part in the provinces; or had he taken to literature, for which he showed a taste, he might have been the "Constitutionalist" of a Tory, or the "Spartacus" of a Radical print; but nowhere could he have been more appropriately placed than in exercising his pen and pencil socially and satirically upon "ye men, ye manners, and ye customs of ye English."

In seeking the ideal of high Art, Watson was no copyist of other men's labours—not even of the antique. His freedom of style prevented him from ever becoming a mannerist. Perhaps no man in his day showed less repetition of himself in his works than Watson; and as there was nothing monotonous, so there was nothing artificial in his designs. His art bore the naturalism of life—nothing abrupt, nothing forced or strained for effect. "Full of life, Sir,—full of life," as the worthy Italian remarked of Watson, and adding in broken English—"did so fast, and such beautiful things, Sir." The free and the graceful pervaded every effort of Watson's, along with a simplicity and purity of feeling. When the subject demanded, as in "The Outcasts," or in the illustration of Rogers's poem, he invested his lines with a tender and devotional spirit. In treating the classical and the poetical he was specially fine, pointed, and grand in Art.

No man laboured more earnestly than Watson in search of the True and the Beautiful in Art, and, considering his age and opportunities, few attained greater success and distinction. He possessed the endowments of the great pioneers and masters in Art—invention, facility in work, a rare classical sentiment, with breadth of feeling, and the finest line and delicacy of execution. Had he lived to carry out his projects, or had he had the chance of the Royal Exchange pediment and other

works to which his great powers entitled him, he would have lent considerable impetus to English Art; and, though this was denied him in part, his Flaxman, Sarpedon, Eldon group, and Carlisle statues, will continue as examples of his genius, and not less profitable as studies for another generation, along with those of Flaxman.



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